A critical appraisal of the engagement process between the police and adults with learning difficulties in South Wales

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A submission presented as partial fulfilment of the requirements of the University of South Wales for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

May 2016

Abstract

Community engagement, which can be difficult to define, is an imperative part of policing as an obligation has been placed upon the police, in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (Home Office, 2004), to engage all sections of the community in order to discover their particular needs and priorities. The process of engaging all members of the community can be difficult for the police, as some members are more difficult to reach than others. This study evaluates the process of community engagement between the police and adults with learning difficulties across South Wales. The findings provide a rich understanding of the engagement process and recognises the value and importance of good quality engagement to adults with learning difficulties and the professionals who support them on a daily basis.

Adults with learning difficulties can face incidents of hate crime on a regular basis, with very few victims willing to approach the police in order to report such crimes and incidents.

The research was undertaken in two stages, stage one participants included professional support workers, and stage two participants were adults who have learning difficulties. Findings indicated that the sample of adults with learning difficulties who participated in the study regularly suffer from a variety of hate crime and incidents on a daily basis, however opportunities for them to engage positively with the police were not evident throughout the entire research area. Pockets of good practice were discovered where individual police officers actively engage this section of the community. The findings also suggest that the majority of participants welcome engagement with the police and the opportunity to discuss their needs and opinions. The findings from the research informed the construction of an engagement model that can be used by the police and/or other agencies who wish to proactively identify and engage potentially vulnerable people.

Issues such as the under-reporting of hate crime, recognising hate crime and the involvement of other agencies were also significant within this thesis.

Acknowledgments

The contribution of the following to the completion of the study is acknowledged and very much appreciated.

The time given by members of ‘People First’ Organisation and professional support workers to participate, without which this study would not have been possible.

My supervisory team, Professor Colin Rogers, Dr James Gravelle and Mr Brian Blakemore for the endless support and advice, which has been invaluable. Dr Robert Jenkins for giving his time to consult with me, his expertise in the area of Intellectual Difficulties was most informative and helpful.

My husband, Carl, who has supported me through moments of doubt and is continually there for me.

My children, Lewis, Olivia and Tomas, who have demonstrated enormous understanding and patience in order for me to take time out of family life to study.

Finally, my close friends and colleagues who have suffered endless conversations about my journey.

In memory of Peter Lewis.

Author's Declaration

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the Regulations of the University of South Wales. The work is original except where acknowledged or indicated by special reference in the text. No part of the thesis has been submitted for any other degree.

Any views expressed in the thesis are those of the author and in no way represent those of the University of South Wales.

The dissertation has not been presented to any other University for examination in the United Kingdom or overseas.

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Chapter One

Introducing the Study

1.1 Motivation behind the Study

The researcher discovered this area of research whilst studying police science as an undergraduate. During this time a consultation took place with a small group of adults who have learning difficulties. The purpose of the consultation was for the researcher to discover what the relationship between this group of people and the police looked like and whether they faced any particular issues and difficulties that the police may be able to help with. It became clear that incidents of hate crime were occurring on a regular basis and the majority of the group described a reluctance to report the crimes to the police for a variety of reasons.

This group of people had previous experience of engagement with the police but at the time of the consultation no regular engagement was taking place, despite a strong desire on their part to build a relationship with the police that would involve regular, proactive engagement.

The researcher was extremely humbled by the experiences that were shared during the consultation, feeling an overwhelming urge to explore the subject further. The researcher vehemently believes in equality, and would ideally like to witness a situation where all potentially vulnerable people are supported and protected. The first step to achieving this is to consult, talk and engage this section of the community, as only they can explain their difficulties and experiences.

1.2 Community Policing

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 places an obligation and requirement on the police to engage all members of the communities they serve (Home Office, 2004; Crawford et al, 2005). Therefore the last decade or so has seen the police, along with other public services, attempt to realign the service they provide in order to better meet the needs of the public they serve (Home Office, 2004). This realignment has brought the realisation that communities are not homogenous entities, instead they are diverse, fragmented and often hostile (Spalek, 2008).

The process of engaging diverse communities is underpinned by a strategy called 'community policing' that, according to Trojanowicz et al (2010), has turned traditional policing upside down and now we see communities being empowered, rather than dictated to. Some commentators believe that community policing strengthens police accountability (Bayley, 1984; Neild, 2001), whilst providing an opportunity for the police to gather intelligence from the community and share decision making, ensuring that the priorities and needs of the community are being met (Friedmann, 1992). The ability to engage effectively with communities is fundamental to the philosophy that is community policing, therefore the process of community engagement will be explored in this study.

1.3 Community Engagement

The relationship between the police and the communities it serves is not straight forward as the police face the obligation and requirement placed upon them to engage all members of the community (Home Office, 2004), and these communities are not homogenous, cohesive and whole entities but are extremely diverse. Within these diverse communities potentially

vulnerable adults reside, some of whom have learning difficulties. It is important that the police engage this section of the community as according to the Disability Rights Commission (2007) nine out of ten adults with learning difficulties will experience hate crime. Hate crime occurs when a victim has been targeted specifically because of their learning difficulty (McLaughlin and Muncie, 2006). The effects of hate crime can be 'uniquely destructive and unsettling' (McLaughlin and Muncie, 2006) and can contribute to the victim feeling vulnerable (Panorama, 2010) as they have been targeted specifically because of their difficulty (McLaughlin and Muncie, 2006).

It is suggested that adults with learning difficulties do not understand what hate crime is and often find ways to cope with incidents or crime rather than report to the police (Sharp, 2001). According to Mencap during an inquiry held in 1999, only 17% of people who had experienced a hate crime reported it to the police (Sharp, 2001), furthermore very few of these reported cases reach court, consequently we see very few convictions in relation to hate crime (Kelly, 2008).

There is a need for greater understanding of hate crime, how the law is applied, and how the police deal with incidents of hate crime. In order for the police to better engage vulnerable adults within our communities and gain further understanding of the issues they face, it is important that they are able to identify those who are potentially vulnerable.

1.4 Vulnerable Adults

As discussed, the communities the police serve are diverse and heterogeneous (Somerville, 2011). It is important that the police consider that a proportion of the community members

they serve may be potentially vulnerable, and in order to gain a better understanding of their needs that they reach out and proactively engage them.

The Welsh Assembly Government (2000) suggest that a vulnerable adult could be any person who is over the age of 18 who is unable to protect themselves against harm or serious exploitation by reason of mental or other disability, illness or age. Adults with learning difficulties fall within this definition, and they are particularly vulnerable if their situation is compounded by additional factors, such as social or emotional problems, sensory impairment, physical frailty, chronic illness, poverty or homelessness (Welsh Government, 2000).

1.5 Hate Crime

Commonly, a hate crime is understood to manifest itself in hostile actions against individuals with certain characteristics, thought to be the result of contempt, hatred and hostility towards a particular group (Scope, 2008). The victim may not have a personal relationship with the perpetrator but they may well live within the same community. Thomas (2012) suggests hate crime can involve street crime, physical assault and criminal damage to residencies, whilst Scope (2008) suggest that hate crime can come in other forms also, such as threat of attack, verbal abuse, harassment, graffiti, bullying, vandalism, malicious complaints, kidnap, rape, torture and murder. There are five main categories of hate crime, it can occur because of a person's race, religion, disability, sexual orientation and because a person is trans-gender (Victim Support, 2013).

Furthermore, where a hate crime is committed against a person with a disability, the Criminal Justice Act 2003 suggests this be recognised as a disability hate crime (Scope, 2008). Due to their potential vulnerabilities it is suggested that adults with learning

difficulties are easy targets for crime, and as previously discussed, within this section of the community few cases of hate crime are reported to the police, and even fewer result in a conviction (Gillen, 2009). This research study was concerned with the claims by Gillen (2009) therefore explored the relationship between the police and adults with learning difficulties in South Wales, with particular interest in the issues these adults face, and whether they feel able to approach the police.

1.6 Context of the Research

The research study took place in South Wales. The research area was specifically chosen to correspond with the South Wales Police Service area which is divided into four areas/divisions. Participants were invited from each area to allow the researcher to identify any differences and draw comparisons across the divisions/areas.

Prior to carrying out the literature review careful consideration was given to the topics that would best provide some context and inform the study. The structure of the review was divided into two elements, the first focused on gaining an understanding of community policing and community engagement and how we define and implement such strategies. To this end, concepts such as the 'Big Society' and models of participation were also explored in order to gain some understanding of where the police place themselves presently in relation to engaging communities.

The second element of the literature review provides some context for the study in terms of understanding disability and issues such as hate crime. As previously discussed, this is a prevalent issue that adults with learning difficulties face on a daily basis. A review of the literature in relation to the learning disability legislation, the terminology used, models of

disability, the experiences of adults with learning difficulties within the criminal justice system, and examples of good practice was undertaken.

Upon commencement of the literature review, four objectives were identified:

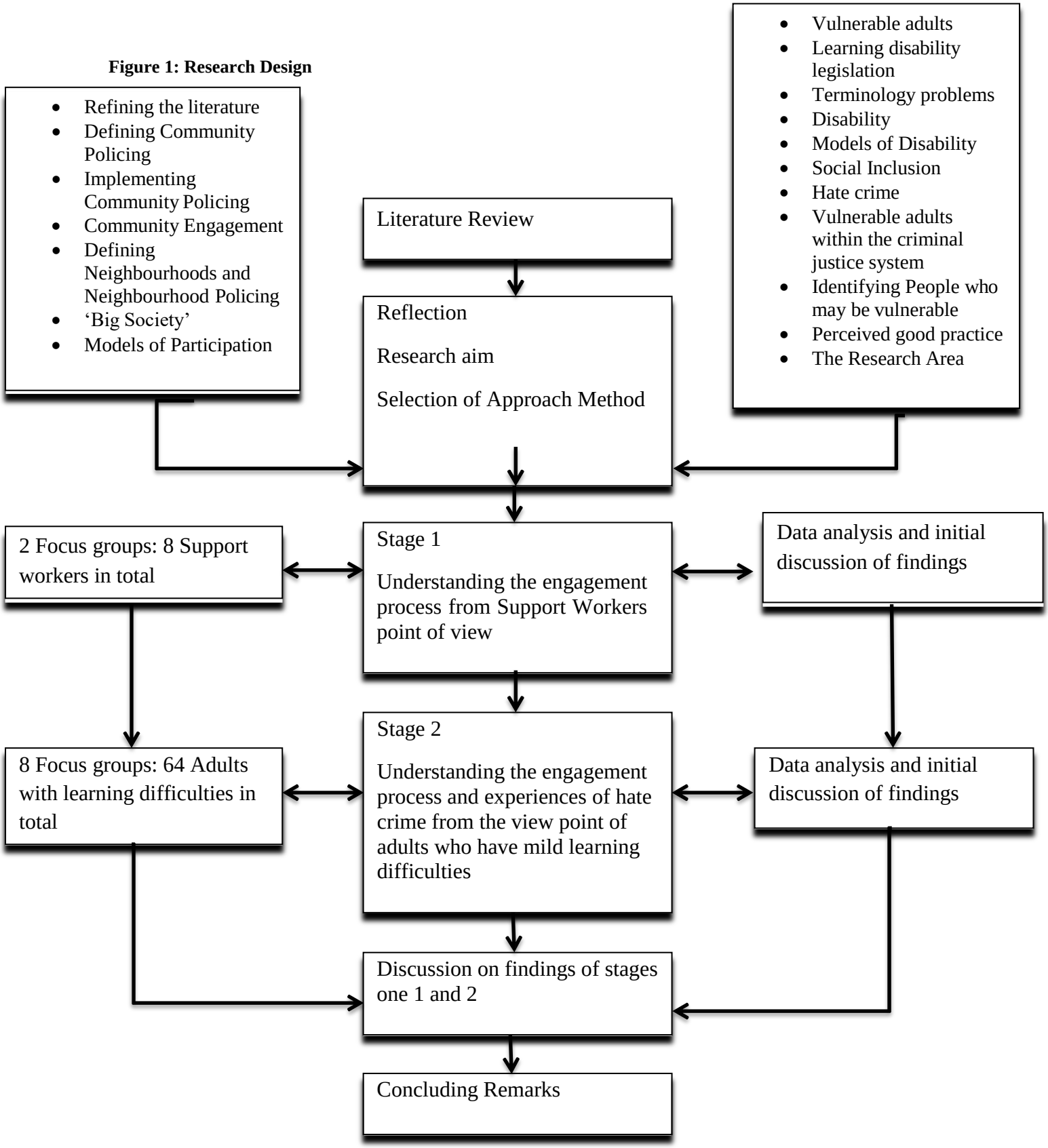
1. Firstly to explore the obligation placed upon the police to engage all sections of the community in order to gain an understanding of their needs and priorities.
2. Secondly, to gain an understanding of the term community engagement and to clarify the term in a policing context.
3. Thirdly, to explore and gain further understanding regarding learning difficulties and the issues this section of the community possibly face.
4. Fourthly, to inform the issues to be explored in the focus groups when gathering data.

1.7 The Research Design

As this study focuses on the engagement of adults with learning difficulties, it is primarily led by the experiences of adults with learning difficulties themselves, as only they are able to describe their own experiences. The opinions of professional support workers was sought also, in order to discuss, confirm and clarify issues emerging from the literature review.

The research is designed in two stages using an exploratory, qualitative approach informed by phenomenology. This involves generating data from each stage together with an analysis of emerging key themes. Upon the conclusion of stage two, findings from the two stages are brought together for discussion and analysis. Figure 1 overleaf shows the design of the research and how the thesis is structured.

Figure 1: Research Design



1.8 Phenomenology

The topic at the heart of this study is relatively under-researched, is of a small-scale and hopes to inform the academic arena with a greater, richer understanding of the views of adults with mild learning difficulties with regard to engagement with the police, and issues such as hate crime. It does not aim to make generalisations. For all these reasons, it is believed that a phenomenological approach would lend itself to a study of this size and nature as phenomenology is concerned with the way people make sense of the world around them and their perceptions of a particular phenomenon (Bryman, 2011; Denscombe, 2010). The researcher is interested in discovering how adults with learning difficulties' experiences shape their behaviour, and how they make sense of their lives through their experiences, therefore the active engagement of participants was necessary in order to gain an understanding of how they interpret the phenomenon in question (Shutz, 1970; Silverman, 2005).

Commentators such as Denscombe (2010) suggest there are advantages and disadvantages of a phenomenological approach to a research study. The fact that it is suited to small scale research studies that explore interesting experiences which are likely to attract a wide audience, whilst providing a complex account of a phenomenon from the viewpoint of the particular section of the community are all thought to be advantages to this choice of research approach. Disadvantages such as the emphasis on subjectivity, description and interpretation and a lack of analysis introduce a criticism that this research approach lacks the 'scientific rigour' associated with a research process that adopts scientific objectivity. Another disadvantage discussed is the danger of the researcher making generalisations from the data (Denscombe, 2010).

1.9 The Structure of the Thesis

This section explains the structure of the thesis, together with a summary of the contents of each chapter.

1.9.1 Chapter Two: The Review of the Literature

Chapter two focuses on a review of the literature. In order to provide a conceptual and theoretical context for the proposed study exploring topics such as community policing and the implementation of this policing strategy through the medium of community engagement. The concept of the 'Big Society' is also examined along with a variety of models of participation in order to provide some analysis as to where the police and communities find themselves placed at present, and the desire the government possess to engage all adults in community matters, to include policing.

In order to gain some understanding about vulnerable adults, particularly adults with learning difficulties, topics such as disability legislation and models of disability were researched. A prevalent issue faced by adults with learning difficulties is hate crime, and the claim that many adults with learning difficulties adapt their lives to attempt to avoid hate crime, rather than reporting to the police was explored.

The experiences of adults with learning difficulties within the criminal justice system was also explored, in the hope that this may, in part, explain why few hate crimes are reported, and of those, few result in conviction.

1.9.2 Chapter Three: Research Method and Data Generation

Following the review of the literature, chapter three outlines the research aim and approach, also examining the research methods that underpin the study. This examination critically analyses the quantitative/qualitative debate and an explanation is provided into the specific research methodology which provides a framework for the study. The decision was made to adopt a qualitative method to the study informed by a phenomenological approach as this was considered to be the most appropriate method. The rationale for this decision is provided within chapter three. Comments on data generation methods for the study together with methods of data analysis and discussion underpinning the decision to use focus groups are included.

Stage one of the study consisted of two focus groups with 8 professionals who support adults who have learning difficulties across South Wales. The purpose of the initial focus groups were to discuss themes that arose from the review of the literature. A rationale for the selection of participants across the research area is also provided.

Stage two of the study explains how data was generated from eight focus groups, with 64 participants who all had mild learning difficulties. The rationale for the selection of participants, and the choice of focus group is discussed in this chapter also.

1.9.3 Chapter Four: Stage One of the Study. The Process and Results

Chapter four presents and discusses the findings of stage one of the study which sought the experiences, views and opinions of professionals who work with adults with mild learning difficulties regarding the engagement process between the police and the adults they support. Two focus groups took place, to include 8 participants from across the geographical area of

the study. Whilst an initial discussion of the findings is included in this chapter, findings from both stages are combined and brought together for discussion in chapter six.

1.9.4 Chapter Five: Stage Two of the Study. The Process and Results

Chapter five focuses on the findings from stage two of the study which was undertaken via focus groups with adults who have learning difficulties, from across South Wales. 64 participants shared their experiences, views and opinions and their motivation for participating in the study.

1.9.5 Chapter Six: Discussion

In chapter six findings from the two stages of the research study are explored in more detail to aid the analysis of the data. In order to progress the engagement process an engagement tool has been constructed and is presented within this chapter. The literature review provided little evidence of the existence of such a tool, but an abundance of reasons why such a tool would be useful. The suggestions contained in the proposed engagement tool were informed by the literature review and research data.

1.9.6 Chapter Seven: Concluding Remarks

Chapter seven draws conclusions in terms of what was learned during this study and how the findings and knowledge may inform future actions and performance in relation to engaging vulnerable members of the community.

Chapter Two

The Review of the Literature

2.1 Introduction

This chapter will examine the discourse surrounding the major concepts and ideas underpinning this research. It has become evident during the last decade or so that many public services are attempting to realign their service provision to meet the needs of the people they serve (Home Office, 2004). Included in this alignment is the realisation that communities are not homogenous, cohesive and whole entities, but are in fact diverse, fragmented and often hostile (Spalek, 2008).

For the public service we call the police, this has in part been a painful process as they have had to tackle such issues as institutional racism (Rowe, 2007) as well as facing the fact that it is their responsibility to engage all members of society (Crawford et al, 2005).

The realisation for the police that communities are so diverse ultimately appeared as a result of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (Home Office, 2004) in which it was made a statutory obligation for the police and their partners to engage in consultation with communities in order to set policing priorities (Home Office, 2004). Underpinning the process of engagement for the police meant the use of a policing approach known as community policing (Trojanowicz et al, 2010). Whilst the rhetoric of engagement and consultation with the community was prolific (Home Office, 2004), it appeared that certain elements of the community were considered 'hard to reach' (Crawford et al, 2005) and may not have benefited from the interaction. Several important areas therefore need to be discussed and analysed in order to reach an understanding of the reason why this research is of some importance.

2.2 Refining the Literature

This section considers the reasons why some literature was important to include, as it supports the research, whilst other was tangential in its use, therefore useful for groundwork but did not include sufficient critical analysis that would support the study.

A systematic review was undertaken in order to identify some of the key issues that require further empirical investigation. Papers that had been peer reviewed and published between 2010 and 2014 were included; papers that were believed to be divergent to the study were not included.

The review of literature was undertaken using the following databases: ASSIA (Applied Social Science Index and Abstracts) and Criminal Justice Abstracts. Appendix H shows a full list of search terms, the number of articles generated during the search, and the number of articles that were relevant to this study. The search terms used to identify relevant studies were adapted for use in the different databases, and duplicates were removed.

Journals such as Police Practice and Research: An International Journal, Police Journal, Policing: a journal of policy and practice, Policing, Policing Today, Police Review, British Journal of Intellectual Disabilities, British Journal of Learning Disabilities, Journal of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, British Journal of Disabilities, and Journal of Mental Health were reviewed, with the aim of sourcing suitable articles that had been published between 2010 and 2014. Further literature was found using a wide range of literature sources, including government policy and guidance and a 'snowball' technique in which additional sources were discovered in the reference lists of initial articles.

2.3 Defining Community Policing

A plethora of publications exist that discuss the topic of community policing. It has become almost a 'buzz-word' for professionals and scholars alike that is often taken for granted

(Friedmann, 1992). Community policing is seen by some as a way to strengthen police accountability (Bayley, 1984; Neild, 2001) and is generally greeted with enthusiasm by policy makers, police practitioners, politicians, scholars and citizens. However, it is sometimes met with resistance. Resistance not necessarily to the principles of community policing but resistance to the changes in the way things are done. Resistance is usually rationalised because it may have high costs, or the resistor questions its efficiency and effectiveness (Friedmann, 1992).

Community policing is a philosophy that has, Trojanowicz (2010) argues, turned traditional policing methods upside down by empowering communities as opposed to dictating to them. There is now a demand for proactive policing, rather than a reactive style of law-enforcement which has been concerned with outputs such as the number of arrests, reductions and increases in crime rates, number of citations, rapid response to calls, and volume of property recovered (Trojanowicz et al, 2010).

The concept of community policing does not lend itself easily to a particular definition, it can mean different things to the different parties involved. From a police perspective, they have a need to improve relationships with the communities as they are reliant on community resources to assist in crime control efforts in order to reduce levels of crime and the fear of crime that the public experience. The police need to be mindful however, that a true picture of community issues can only be gained if all members of the community are engaged. Improved relations would also increase the opportunity for the police to gather intelligence. It is also believed that community policing increases police legitimacy within the community (Friedmann, 1992). There is a growing desire, from the perspective of the community, to receive improved police services, accompanied by an increase in power sharing and decision making and increased accountability (Friedmann, 1992). Therefore, from the joint perspective of the community and police, community policing assumes that the police have

relatively little control over crime which is produced by societal factors, and that crime control should focus on these factors in order to reduce crime. In order to achieve this the police need to adopt a proactive approach to policing. A pre-requisite to the implementation of community policing is decentralisation with a greater focus on the 'quality of life' issues (Friedmann, 1992). Decentralisation is important as communities are so diverse in nature. There is a real need for the police to truly understand the local communities they serve, and gain understanding of individual needs. Once again this suggests a need for the police to get to know all members of the community, which is reliant on a locally driven, proactive approach to engagement.

In an attempt to combine varying perspectives into one workable definition, Friedmann (1992:4) suggests that:

> *"Community policing is a policy and a strategy aimed at achieving more effective and efficient crime control, reduced fear of crime, improved quality of life, improved police services and police legitimacy, through a proactive reliance on community resources that seeks to change crime – causing conditions. It assumes a need for greater accountability of police, greater public share in decision-making and greater concern for civil rights and liberties."*
>
> (Friedmann, 1992:4).

Friedmann's definition brings together a variety of elements that are very much reliant on a proactive police service, with importance placed on matters such as civil rights and liberties and improved quality of life for citizens, which is much more than the typical ideology of a police 'force', indeed it could be suggested that the police need to view themselves as a 'service' rather than 'force'.

Trojanowicz et al (2010) concur with this view and suggest that community policing should empower communities and give the police the opportunity to derive its agenda from the community, rather than a circumstance where the police dictate to the community and enforce the law, this will require a transformation in how policing is performed. Trojanowicz et al propose that the police now need to be facilitators, advisors, supporters of the community and leaders of new community-based initiatives. Also, it is believed that these new initiatives

require the community to demonstrate trust, in fact, there needs to be mutual trust between the community and the police. The police need to do far more than impose their power and authority on communities, they should instead seek new ways in which they can cooperate with them and increase trust sufficiently so the public will come forward with information and work in partnership with them. Furthermore, it is suggested that, historically, it is the wealthier, middle class members of our communities who have a greater level of trust for the police, whereas the relationship between the police and the poorer members of our communities, or marginalised minority groups has not been good. This is a situation that does not sit well within the requirements of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 which suggest the police need to engage all members of the community, as previously discussed. It is proposed that some members of our communities may view the police as uniformed strangers who could possibly hurt them rather than help them; therefore there is a need for the police to broaden its efforts in reaching all community members so that potentially vulnerable members of our communities, such as the elderly, minority groups, the disabled, the poor, the homeless and juveniles are protected (Trojanowicz et al, 2010). Indeed, it is suggested that the police uniform has the ability to affect how a police officer behaves and, at times, encourage an officer to become human rights unfriendly, whether consciously or unconsciously, they can assume a particular police ego, causing them to act as an authoritarian figure (Vadackumchery, 2000). The police uniform in these circumstances appears to present a barrier between the police and some members of the community and is not conducive to the police becoming positive, proactive figures in the community who are concerned with improving the quality of citizens' lives. It is acknowledged that it is necessary at times, in certain situations that the police need to exude authority when they require cooperation and compliance. The uniform in such situations, according to Miller and Hess (2007), provides an important visible reminder to the public that a police officer is

indeed a figure of authority and power. However, it is important that the police remain approachable to potentially vulnerable members of the community, therefore the police need to be aware of the possible difficulties associated with the police uniform and adopt ways in which to reach those in the community who may be afraid or intimidated.

Friedmann (1992) provides interesting discussion surrounding the entities that are the 'police' and 'community', exploring how exclusive or overlapping they are, or should be. This discussion and exploration provides some understanding of the relationship between the police and communities with the primary aim of arriving at an appropriate mode in which the two concepts (police and community) can best interact with each other. The discussion undoubtedly introduces the possibility that the relationship between the police and communities can be viewed in different ways with differing perspectives. Friedmann proposes there are five logical possibilities. These are examined in Figure 2.

The first possibility explored by Friedmann considers the likelihood that the police and the community could be mutually exclusive from each other. This is a notion that is difficult to appreciate, especially in most Western style democracies as police recruits come from communities, sharing some common experiences and backgrounds with the community and upon completion of shifts they return to live within the community and are indeed, members of the community themselves (Friedmann, 1992).

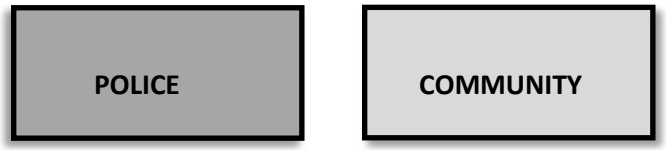
In the second of Friedmann's ideas he describes a scenario where the police completely overlap the community. This could possibly be the case in the exclusive event of the police taking part in a 'total institution' form of academy training. Officers in this instance would constitute a community. The academy, however, is only a training vehicle and is not what policing is about (Friedmann, 1992).

The third concept considered by Friedmann describes a scenario where the police all-encompass the community. An example of this would be a 'Big Brother' style incident in

East Germany in the 1980s (Dennis and Laporte, 2011), where hundreds of thousands of state employees were given the task to spy on and collect information about citizens. Citizens were effectively turned into paid employees and informers of the state (Friedmann, 1992).
The fourth idea, involves the community all en-compassing the police, it largely describes situations where a community police themselves. For example, Amish communities have very strong internal, informal social control forces. Violations are dealt with internally in most cases unless a violation becomes of interest or concern externally and the police would be sought. Friedmann believes these communities do, on the whole, function well and exist without the presence of uniformed police. However, this may not work so well for larger communities or cities (Friedmann, 1992).
The fifth, most logical option that Friedmann describes is a partial overlap. Communities utilise the police as their official, law enforcement arm that will deal with the community's undesirable people, criminals, law violators, order breakers. How much the two entities overlap will depend on the particular circumstances (Friedmann, 1992). This study will attempt to gain understanding about the level of 'overlap' in terms of engagement between the police and members of the community in South Wales who are potentially vulnerable. If the need of the community member is great, it could be suggested the level of engagement should increase to meet that particular need. Without sufficient 'overlap' or 'engagement' the police will fail to understand the needs of the community, and will therefore be unable to tailor their proactive style of policing to suit the unique community circumstances.
Friedmann's concept whilst being worthy requires the police to fully concur with the principles of this concept, for it is more likely that true engagement can only take place if the police are fully committed. Figure 2 overleaf demonstrates Friedmann's ideology.

Figure 2: The Police and Community and how they possibly overlap.

Police and community as mutually exclusive entities:

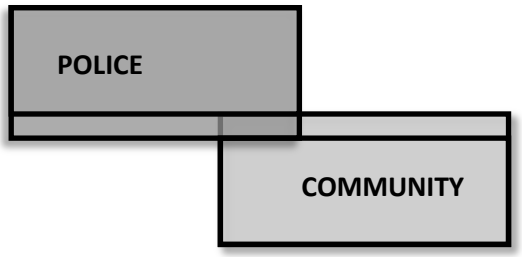


Police and community as overlapping entities:

Police as all-encompassing the community:

Community as all-encompassing of police:

Police and community as partially overlapping:



(Friedmann, 1992).

2.4 Implementing Community Policing

As discussed, community policing necessitates a decentralisation of authority and patrol strategies in order to encourage communication between police and communities, and the development of new partnerships needs to have a combined commitment to problem-oriented policing. Such decentralisation of strategies would allow the public to actively participate in setting local priorities and assist in the police and partner agencies in the development of tactics to solve crime and disorder problems, quality of life issues, fear of crime in their local areas (Skogan and Hartnett, 1997; Trojanowicz et al, 2010). In order for this to happen the police and partner agencies need to facilitate and encourage good quality engagement and participation of all community members. Community policing is not a static entity, it needs to be creative and innovative as communities are ever changing. It requires input from the broad community so that a robust understanding of the issues they face, the needs/desires of all community members can be gained in order for accurate and appropriate solutions to be considered. There is no 'one size fits all' approach to community policing, the demographics of each community will vary considerably, each area is diverse, therefore it is vitally important that the police accurately understand the needs of each community rather than imposing their own will upon them (Trojanowicz et al, 2010; Rix et al, 2009). Whilst advocates of community policing view public participation as central to its implementation, some commentators have been critical suggesting that the police service has some difficulty generating public interest in engagement (Grinc, 1994; Skogan, 1995; Herbert, 2006). Furthermore it is suggested that community policing is dispensed more readily in areas with lower crime rates, and 'wealthier' residents (Herbert, 2006; Loader, 2006; Tilley, 2008), which results in the police reinforcing already good relationships with middle-class citizens (Laycock and Tilley, 1995) and marginalising/neglecting members of the community who are

potentially vulnerable. If this is the case, it is suggested that adults with learning difficulties could be omitted from engagement.

It is further suggested that crime prevention (Skogan, 2008), neighbourhood watch schemes (Weatheritt, 1986), and citizen patrols (Dempsey, 2011) are encouraged by the police in this dramatic change in the way they engage the public. According to Trojanowicz et al (2010), a robust strategy is crucial in order to implement community policing, and a level of permanence is recommended where the same officers, working the same beat daily, are able to form good quality relationships with community members. These frontline police officers, along with police community support officers need to be developed and appropriately trained, as they are the direct link between the police and communities. It would be preferable that they be free from the constraints inevitably created by the demands of a police radio. They must have daily, face-to-face contact with the communities they are serving. This will increase the level of trust as discussed earlier, and build familiarity with the residents, their activities and social problems. It is also argued that police officers who work on the same beat each shift will begin to feel a sense of responsibility for what occurs within their beat area. There needs to be a definite shift in attitude towards solving community problems, and greater autonomy given to frontline officers (Trojanowicz et al, 2010). The role of Police Community Support Officer, which will be discussed later, can play a vital part in this process, particularly if the police wish to meet the requirements suggested by Trojanowicz (2010) at a time when policing resources are austere.

It is clear that the process of community engagement is vitally important to the implementation of community policing. The police need to encourage, induce and motivate community members to become more involved in their communities, whether that is as part of a neighbourhood watch group, taking part in patrols, getting actively involved in youth work, volunteer schemes or reporting crimes or suspicious activity. The police have to play

this vital role as they can assist the community to identify partner agencies that could work alongside them. Communities can lack resources and be disorganised, therefore the process of community engagement is better accomplished when it is carried out in partnership with other agencies (Trojanowicz et al, 2010).

2.4.1 Community Engagement

Providing a definition for community engagement has long been a subject of discussion, it can be a challenge to define as in different circumstances, to different people, it can mean different things (Arnstein, 1969; Myhill, 2006; Home Office, 2007; Wakefield, 2009).
In an attempt to respond to this predicament, Myhill (2006:8) suggests a definition of community engagement is important so that an appropriate level of engagement can be achieved, and as such developed the following definition that can be given consideration within policing policy:

> *"The process of enabling the participation of citizens and communities in policing at their chosen level, ranging from providing information and reassurance, to empowering them to identify and implement solutions to local problems and influence strategy priorities and decisions"*
> (Myhill, 2006:8).

Terminology can cause confusion, as a multitude of terms are used, including 'community', 'public', 'citizen', 'involvement', 'engagement', 'participation'. There is little consistency, and some commentators believe, without a commonly used definition and explanation it can be problematic for a service provider to understand what is required of them, leading to operational difficulties (Wakefield and Fleming, 2009; Evans, 2010). The problems experienced defining community engagement are not unique to the police, it is a continuing theme throughout all public services, all of which suggest there are difficulties surrounding terminology and interpretation of what is required, leading to inconsistencies in approaches to engagement and involvement (Barbalet, 1988).

Myhill (2006) stresses the importance that communities and citizens are able to choose the level of involvement that they wish to have in the engagement process, reiterating that the opportunities must exist for them to participate if they wish to do so. Myhill also believes that all parties (the police and the communities) must be willing to participate in the process for it to be successful. This is problematic because it cannot be assumed that all members of the community want to engage, likewise it cannot be taken for granted that engagement is welcomed by the police. There is a requirement that the police respond to input from the public, unless there is a justifiable reason why they should not (Myhill, 2006).

Involvement, it is suggested by Creighton (2005) is a process where public needs, concerns and values are incorporated into decision making and should not be viewed as merely the police providing information to the public. There needs to be an interaction between the police and the members of the public who wish to participate and this needs to be an organised process and not something that occurs by accident, or by coincidence. The police must therefore organise itself appropriately in order to ensure that all members of the community are consulted.

Creighton's definition of involvement has some resonance with the definition provided of public involvement provided by the International Association of Public Participation (2007) which agrees that the public needs to have a say in decisions that affect their lives, and that their participation will contribute to decision making. This can be witnessed to some extent in local Partners and Communities Together (PACT) meetings, which will be discussed in more detail later.

Pickering et al (2008) consider the primary aim of community engagement should be to evolve and build trust with communities. The absence of trust could result in any form of engagement being greeted with hostility and suspicion. Some members of the community who have been traditionally marginalised may feel sensitive and wary of the police and feel

they are being targeted in order for the police to gather intelligence; this should not be the case (Pickering et al, 2008). It is suggested that the majority of effective strategies that improve the public's confidence in the police are those that have increased the amount of community engagement. This should be considered a long term process that will help to increase the community's confidence in the police; it is believed to be core to the delivery of policing (Rix et al, 2009; Home Office, 2004).

As previously discussed, in order for the police to ensure they are obtaining an accurate reflection of the community's needs, it is important that the police engage with all sections of the community, their individual needs and preferences could vary considerably, the use of high quality engagement, local-level communications such as newsletters, targeted foot patrols and effective problem solving are suggested to be elements proven to work well (Rix et al, 2009).

The engagement process not only allows the police to gather a clearer picture of the demographic of the community, but provides the opportunity to share information regarding community safety issues and also to receive feedback from community members regarding the engagement process itself, which allows them to reflect and tailor their engagement strategies accordingly. It is a process that should not be considered as something the police 'do' to communities, or as an 'add-on', rather it needs to be viewed as a shared experience. A genuine distribution of power is necessary if this process of a shared experience is to be fair, open and transparent. The police therefore need to relinquish some of the decision-making to communities (Myhill, 2006; Wakefield and Fleming, 2009; Home Office, 2004).

The police organisation as a whole, it is argued, needs to show commitment to community engagement, and not merely pay it lip service. Myhill (2006) suggests that evidence shows some reservations to this significant cultural change, therefore a change in organisational culture is required. If police officers do not believe the community policing approach is

desirable or feasible then this could impact upon the quality of delivery considerably. Without high quality delivery of community engagement the consequences could be that a reduction of confidence will occur instead (Rix et al, 2009).

Alongside a cultural change, improvements in training need to occur to ensure police officers are adequately trained, allowing subsequent interaction/engagement with the public is successful, resulting in an increase in confidence. The police may also with to consider that reaching the potentially hard to reach and potentially vulnerable members of the community may require a specialist approach. There is no evidence to suggest studies have been undertaken which specifically examine the training provided to officers in relation to the process of community engagement. However, there is evidence from a study carried out in the United States of America that states many police officers are not trained adequately for community policing roles, and that even a relatively simple task such as running a public meeting, may not appear too challenging yet it requires a specific skill set (Myhill, 2006). Furthermore, alongside improved training for police officers, improvements are required with regard to the supervision officers receive, a top-down commitment to community engagement needs to be evident (Cordner, 2013).

When exploring the process of engagement, Clements (2006) suggests the service provider needs to consider whether the community is cohesive, and whether community members want to engage with the police and other agencies. It may be the case that the public's priorities are not in line with the priorities of the police, in which case they may not be willing or able to work together (Clements, 2006).

Myhill (2006) argues that if the expectations of the community are managed ineffectively by the police and partner agencies there could be a negative impact on communities and indeed individuals, particularly the vulnerable, marginalised members of our communities (Myhill, 2006). The need for community cohesion, according to the Local Government Association

(LGA, 2002), goes beyond race equality and social inclusion. Denham (2001:18) defines community cohesion as:

> *"Community cohesion requires that there is a shared sense of belonging based on common goals and core social values, respect for differences (ethnic, cultural and religious) and acceptance of the reciprocal rights and obligations of community members working together for the common good"* (Denham, 2001:18).

Rogers and Lewis (2007) further suggest that in addition to understanding the community's needs, it is important that the police gain a good understanding of the role that they share with other agencies, criminal justice partners and groups. Monthly Partners and Communities Together (PACT) meetings provide an opportunity to witness the police and other agencies working in partnership with communities. During such meetings the police are also able to gain an understanding of the other agencies, criminal justice partners and the extended police family within each area (Rogers and Lewis, 2007), which is vital as the police alone cannot tackle all the quality of life issues that arise during problem-solving activities (Myhill, 2006). A difficulty faced by the police and partner agencies is the engagement of <u>all</u> community members in such meetings. They must be made available to all; therefore the police must acknowledge that some people could possibly feel unable to attend. With this issue in mind, it is suggested that the police should provide the public with support and information, detailing how they can become involved in the engagement process, empowering them so that they can participate in policing if they wish (House of Commons Home Affairs Committee, 2008; Myhill, 2006). This requires proactive engagement and a sound understanding of community demographics, and acknowledgement that some members of the community need increased levels of support.

A major vehicle for community policing and for promoting engagement in England and Wales is that of the Neighbourhood Policing idea.

2.4.2 Neighbourhood Policing

Neighbourhood policing was piloted under the National Reassurance Policing Programme (NRPP), at a cost in excess of £1 billion (HMIC, 2008; Home Office, 2008). It focused on three components, a police service that is dedicated, familiar, visible and accessible to the community it serves; that targets signal crime and disorder; and works with partner agencies and the public. Sixteen wards that fell within eight forces in England took part in the pilot from October 2003, six were matched to a control site. It was found after twelve months that confidence in the police had increased in the pilot sites. Further analysis into the findings discovered that this increase in confidence was associated with targeted foot patrols; identifying community priorities for action; and effective problem solving (Tuffin et al, 2006).

Further research was carried out in order to discover whether the improvements made during the first year could be sustained in the long term. This showed that the improvements made during the first year were largely sustained. The importance of the police maintaining focus on constant delivery in the long-term was stressed. It is suggested that good quality community engagement can produce substantial results, however, it should be notes that the quality of the engagement is important, and results cannot be achieved by merely the quantity of and presence of officers on the street, their engagement must be effective. Whilst foot patrol is important, it is insufficient alone in prompting large-scale changes in public perceptions. In order for community engagement to be of a good quality, not only should police officers be undertaking foot patrols, but officers should be given responsibility for making contact with residents and businesses within their community (Quinton and Morris, 2008). There needs to be a shift from reactive to proactive policing (Bullock, 2010). Potentially vulnerable adults, who may feel intimidated by the police uniform, may not feel reassured by police presence. For this section of the community reassurance can only be

achieved by adapting their engagement strategy and developing a tailored engagement strategy that would allow them to take time to get to know individual needs.

Since the previous government's police reform programme in 2002, there has been a focus on neighbourhood policing and a more citizen focused policing style, calling for the police to inspire public confidence and act upon the needs of the communities (Rogers, 2008; HMIC, 2008; Home Office, 2008). The government's White Paper 'Building Communities, Beating Crime. A Better Police Service for the 21st Century' (Home Office, 2004:46) states the government's intention to make improvements to the customer service culture of the police, requiring them:

> *"…to work directly with local people to identify and tackle the problems that are most important to them"*
>
> (Home Office, 2004:46).

This is an area that the Home Office acknowledged clearly needed improving as historically the police have difficulties engaging all members of the community. The introduction and implementation of neighbourhood policing was a major undertaking for the police service, government and partner agencies (Quinton and Morris, 2008).

The Home Office (2004) suggest a person's confidence in and perception of the police can be shaped by experiences during their first contact with them, therefore there is a need for the police to consider adopting a proactive, positive engagement strategy. The Home Office also state the need for the public to engage and cooperate with the police, for them to be confident that their treatment by the police will be good, and that their voices will be heard. They must be confident that the police will act upon what they are saying (Home Office, 2004). The Home Office stress the importance of good quality engagement in order for an increase in confidence to become evident.

Research undertaken by Bullock and Leeney (2013) would suggest that police officers working within Neighbourhood Policing Teams reported the community's they work within

experiencing increased confidence in the police. Whether it is possible to maintain such a notion with ever decreasing resources remains to be seen. Rogers (2008) however, maintains that neighbourhood policing is one of the most high profile police team initiatives suggesting that:

> *"…it appears to be straightforward, and states that it is about building new relationships between the police and the public, and dealing with crime and disorder more intelligently. There is a real need for cooperation from the public rather than merely their consent"*
>
> (Rogers, 2008:230).

For neighbourhood policing to be implemented effectively, there is a need to identify and define 'neighbourhoods'.

2.4.3 Defining Neighbourhoods

There are social factors to consider when attempting to define a 'neighbourhood'. For instance, a person living in a rural area will hold a different opinion about what defines a neighbourhood than a person who resides in the inner city (Rogers, 2008). The government allows for each local community, police force and local authority to define what a neighbourhood is and as a result these differ across the country. As previously discussed, there is a need for the local policing team to come to know the communities that they work in, so that they can gain some understanding of the needs of members of the community. In view of the fact that not every person in the community will want to engage with the police, this can be a challenge, but it is only when the police have some comprehension of the community needs that they can begin to respond to these needs effectively. The police need input from the communities, and are unable to respond to crime on their own. With good quality engagement, vital information can be gained (Rogers, 2008; Quinton and Morris, 2008).

A neighbourhood policing team consists of a number of people that all play a vital role, aiming to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour, outlined by Rogers (2008) in Table 1.

Table 1: Neighbourhood Policing Teams.

- **Police officers**
- **Police community support officers**
- **Police specials**
- **Private security guards**
- **Community intelligence**
- **Community representatives**
- **Volunteers**
- **Neighbourhood watch groups**
- **Parish or neighbourhood wardens**
- **Traffic wardens/traffic officers**

(Rogers, 2008).

Rogers (2008:232) states that this is much more than high visibility reassurance policing:

> *"It uses local knowledge and intelligence from local people to target crime hotspots and disorder issues causing the most concern to local communities"*
>
> (Rogers, 2008:232).

Rogers (2008) describes a style of policing that would indeed fulfil the requirements of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, as discussed previously.

The Home Office (2004) support this view, stating that having dedicated teams of police officers and police community support officers who work alongside wardens and other members of the 'extended police family' provides a visible, reassuring accessible presence in the community.

An important role in neighbourhood policing is that of the police community support officer (PCSO), introduced to policing in the 2002 Police Reform Act (O'Neill, 2014), they provide vital support to police officers, working closely with local communities, assisting in reassurance of community members, South Wales Police (2009) describe them as:

> *"The eyes and ears of the neighbourhood….at the heart of communities"*
> (South Wales Police, 2009).

The role of the police community support officer (PCSO) in the opinion of the Neighbourhood Policing Policy was seen as a unique, valuable asset to the police service, an important addition to the wider police team. The PCSO, it was intended, would provide greater public reassurance through an increase in the presence of the police on the streets, at a time when policing resources were finding it difficult to maintain these functions, enhancing community policing (Madsen, 2007).

According to South Wales Police (2014) a PCSO provides a link between the community and the police service, a vital role in ensuring everyone has the support they need. South Wales Police continue to describe how PCSO will engage people to find out what they want and what the police service can do to provide results, which could involve tackling speeding outside schools, reporting vandalism, or working to reduce anti-social behaviour. Such duties, it is felt, will facilitate the development of long-lasting relationships between the police and the community. Potential candidates for this position are required to possess excellent communication skills to allow them to fulfil such requirements.

It is agreed that the role of PCSO is vital in the neighbourhood policing team, providing communities with a readily accessible face. Other members of the neighbourhood policing team outlined by Rogers (2008), such as volunteers, neighbourhood watch groups, and community representatives will play a crucial part in the 'Big Society' initiative introduced by government.

2.4.4 Big Society

As part of the new government's plan to reconnect the police and the people, the term 'Big Society' has been frequently used. The aim of the government is to empower citizens to become more involved and have more of a say in how their communities are policed, something that has underpinned the political philosophy of the Conservative party. It has been described as allowing communities to have control over their destinies, but will also help to reduce the budget deficit (BBC News, 2010).

The government describes a move towards:

> "*A society where the leading force for progress is social responsibility, not state control"*
> (Conservative government, 2010).

The government appears to have an ambition to encourage every adult in the country to become actively involved in their neighbourhood group (Conservative government, 2010), not only just having a say in setting priorities, but by enabling them to take it further and become involved in mobilising neighbourhood activists, encouraging community members to take part in joint patrols with the police, look out for their neighbours and pass on community safety tips (Home office 2010, Innes 2010). This could be referred to as 'participative policing' as community members would be more involved in policing activities than ever before (Innes, 2010).

Innes (2010) suggests that these changes to the level of citizen participation could be viewed as significant and dramatic, not a revolution, but more evolution. Gravelle and Rogers (2010) suggest that Cameron's 'Big Society' will require mass engagement, which inevitably has implications for the police service as they will need to work together and engage with ever empowered communities, something that Innes (2010) suggests the police will find challenging. This reform provides the police with an opportunity to reflect on the engagement process, and indeed the 'Big Society' and its implications for policing have

focused discussion surrounding the current process of police/community involvement. The report on 2020 Public Services (2010), which examined how the delivery of public services in general needs to be redefined in this current economic and political climate, stated that:

> *"Engagement with citizens and those working within public services is vital. Without substantively engaging citizens and those working to deliver public services in debates about their future, good ideas can easily be frustrated by fears of change, vested interests, and institutional inertia"*
> (2020 Public Services Trust, 2010:14).

The clear message here is that a greater interaction between the community and public services is needed to deliver and maintain a satisfactory level of service quality; this process for the police service is called 'community engagement'. The need for special constables and other police volunteers to become involved in policing activities will increase, which will open up the police service to a more diverse group of people (Home Office, 2010; Innes 2010, Rogers and Milliner, 2010), which could as a consequence lead to the police being more representative of the communities it serves. The use of community members to take part in policing of their own communities, working towards keeping their own neighbourhoods safe is described as a 'key building block' for the 'Big Society' (Home Office, 2010; Rogers and Milliner, 2010).

Neighbourhood policing teams play a crucial role as they can engage with people in order to understand the communities priorities, needs and concerns, seeing the world through the eyes of the community rather than focusing on issues that the criminal justice system suggest are important (Innes, 2010a), which is significant in the government's current police reform plans (Home Office, 2010; Rogers and Milliner, 2010). In problem areas, neighbourhood policing teams are particularly vital, they need to create an environment where communities can begin to tackle local problems, something that in some problem areas could potentially be a risky strategy for community members as the risk of threat or retaliation may be high (Innes, 2010).

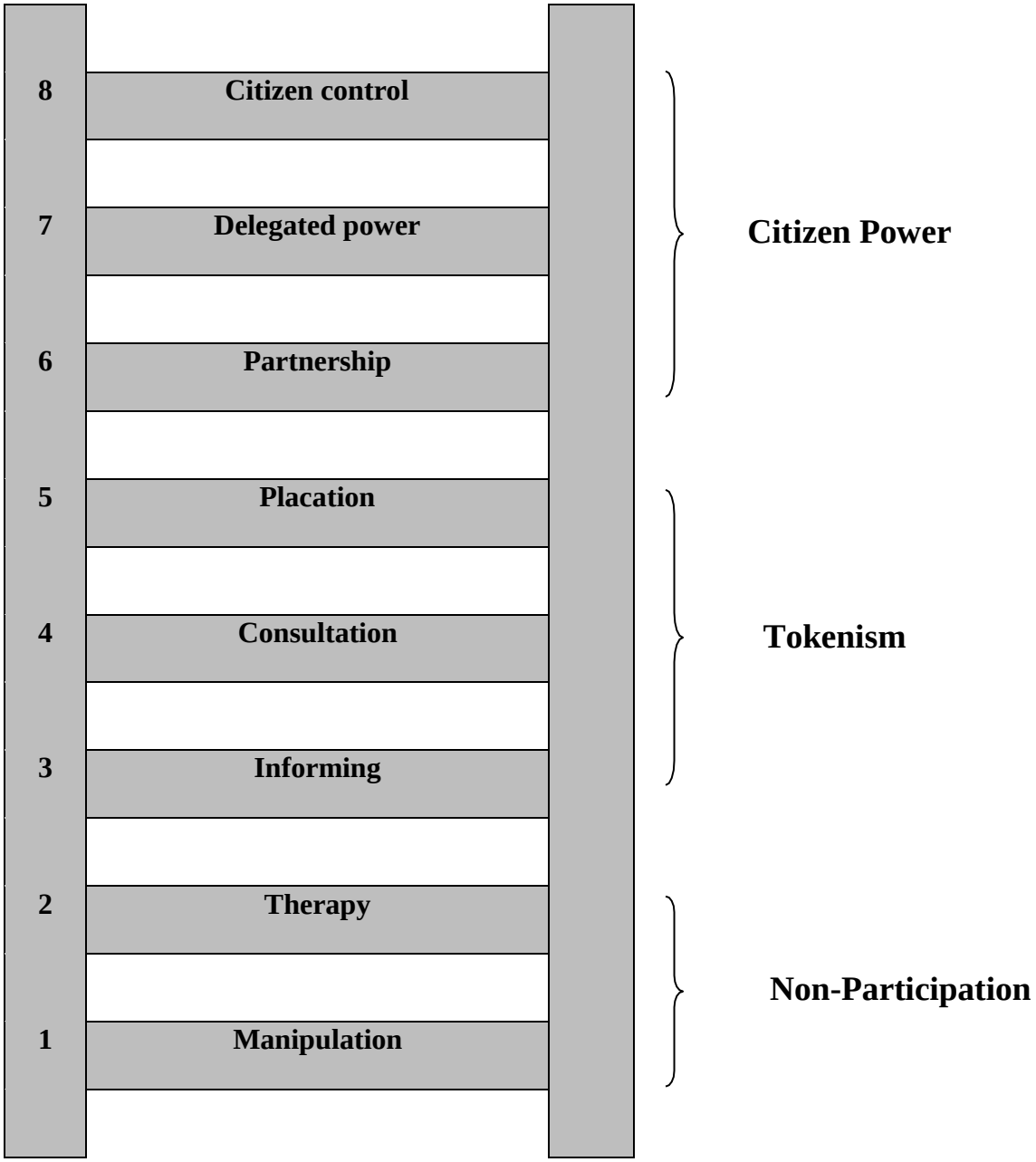
Innes (2010) suggested that police numbers would be reduced as in all probability public services will suffer cutbacks. Indeed, the number of police officers has fallen from 143,734 to 132,234 since the coalition government introduced the budget cuts, the lowest level in 11 years (Travis, 2013). Gravelle and Rogers (2010) consider the possibility that any gap in the provision of policing to communities across England and Wales will need to be bridged by the 'Big Society' approach.

Innes (2010) describes a fear that the government are not just looking for the police service to do more with less, but they are looking to reduce resources in police, whilst increasing citizen participation/involvement in a participative style of policing. This may result in less meaningful policing activity as members of the community may well be able to take part in patrols, despite not being equipped to undertake the variety of tasks and interventions that only the police can take on. In order for the government to achieve an increase with citizen participation it would be beneficial to explore theoretical models of participation as these will provide further insight into interpretations of engagement/involvement/participation.

2.4.5 Theoretical Models of Participation

The explanation of public participation is not an easy process. In an attempt to examine the process, ideas provided by Arnstein's ladder of citizen participation (1969) have been widely cited over the years. Figure 3 overleaf provides an outline of Arnstein's 'ladder of participation', a relatively simple eight step ladder that assists in the demonstration that there are many significant levels or stages in citizen participation with public agencies, particularly the police (Myhill, 2006; Strong and Hedges, 2000).

Figure 3: Arnstein's Ladder of Participation.



Adapted from Arnstein (1969).

Arnstein explains that step one on the ladder of participation, manipulation, is a level of 'non-participation' which does not allow the community/citizens any participation in planning, but allows the power holder (the police) to 'educate' them. Citizens are unable to take part in planning, instead they are presented with pre-decided proposed plans by the police. This involves a one way flow of information, there is no channel for feedback (Arnstein, 1969).

This step on the ladder in the context of policing is reliant on community members receiving information from the police. Some community members may not be in the position to access or receive information, therefore the police need to consider more proactive ways in which information can be passed to the community.

Further up the ladder, informing and consultation are described as levels of 'tokenism' which allow the community/citizens enough power to hear what the police have to say, also having a voice to share their views/opinions, albeit without the power to ensure their views are heeded. Again, this step on the ladder assumes that community members are able to engage and share their views and concerns. Not all people will be willing or feel confident enough to approach the police.

Placation is considered to be a higher level of 'tokenism' allowing citizens the ability to advise the police, with no decision-making power still, the power remains with the power holders (the police) who can decide whether the advice provided by citizens is feasible (Arnstein, 1969). It is possible that this step on Arnstein's ladder would require a cultural change, as the police would need to see the value and worth in consulting communities.

The first step into 'citizen power' is at the partnership level, as citizens can negotiate and engage in trade-offs with service providers, through joint committees the police and citizens can share the planning and decision making responsibility. The higher levels of 'citizen-power' are delegated power and citizen control which provide citizens with the majority of the decision-making seats, giving them full power (Arnstein, 1969).

This simple model has received some criticism for the principle that participation has a 'hierarchy', and that citizens/community members at the bottom of the ladder should aspire to move to the top. It has been suggested in recent years, that citizens are often, due to them possessing different skill sets, happy to be at different levels of the ladder. For example, time constraints may mean a person remains at the bottom of the ladder, and they may be perfectly

happy to just receive information from the police without having any input themselves, whilst a person with more time on their hands may be happier to sit at the top of the ladder, where their involvement could be more intense. As discussed previously in Myhill's (2006) definition of community engagement, the level of involvement needs to be the decision of the individual citizen.

The application of Arnstein's philosophies to the subject of police/community engagement is useful in understanding the issues surrounding the power balance that apparently exist within this relationship at present. A simple provision of information to the community, such as a poster put up in the community or the provision of information on a website would be considered to sit at the 'non-participation' level of the ladder, as these acts only intend to provide information to the public. Whereas local Partnerships and Communities Together (PACT) meetings, previously discussed, could be viewed as 'tokenism' to a certain extent, as community members are encouraged to come together to voice their concerns and opinions about local issues that are impacting upon their lives. During these monthly meetings, the police and other partners present assist with the decision-making process in order to determine which issues receive priority. The meetings provide the community with the opportunity to meet and get to know their local police officer (South Wales Police, 2010; Home Office, 2010). Whilst this form of formal contact and engagement with communities is a step in the right direction, it is argued that they are frequently unrepresentative and unsuccessful (Jones and Newburn, 2001) and that public perception of 'community engagement' should be linked more to informal contact (Bowling and Foster, 2002; Myhill, 2006; Newburn and Jones, 2007). Foster and Jones (2010) suggest that neighbourhood policing teams acknowledge the difficulties associated with their consultative framework, however these are accepted rather than challenged.

As previously mentioned, the government has plans of a 'Big Society, matched by Big Citizens' (Home Office, 2010). This philosophy has the potential to move the level of involvement that the public has with the police further up Arnstein's ladder of participation, to a more meaningful level of participation which allows a real and robust citizen power in the delivery of policing services at local level, increasing community involvement as well as increasing police accountability to local communities. Gravelle and Rogers (2010) suggest that the police will need to be engaging with:

> *"An ever empowered community, as they work together in setting short, medium and long-term objectives for policing within their community"*
>
> (Gravelle and Rogers, 2010).

Interestingly, Arnstein's model explores the power balance between participants in the decision-making process (Evans, 2010; Lukes, 2005). Arnstein (1969:216) suggest that citizen power must be meaningful to all who participate. Without a shift in power, any involvement will be purely tokenistic, allowing those in power (the police) to retain their control

> *"Citizen participation is a categorical term for citizen power. It is the redistribution of power that enables the have-not citizens to be deliberately included in the future"*
>
> (Arnstein, 1969:216).

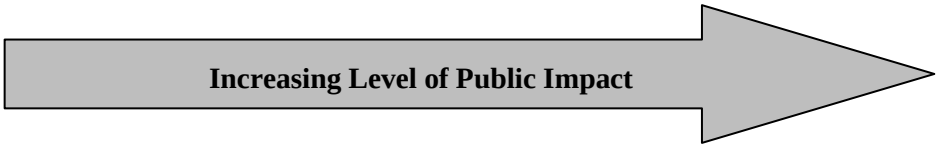
Whilst Arnstein's ladder of participation describes distinctly stages of the process that can be applied to police and community engagement, concerns surrounding the accessibility to participation for adults with learning difficulties remain. Without proactive steps from the police it remains extremely difficult for this section of the community to participate at their chosen level. It may be the case that potentially vulnerable adults would welcome the opportunity to place themselves higher on the 'ladder' but are unable to do so due to the absence of meaningful engagement with the police. In the interest of equality and fairness, if members of the public are able to decide the level of participation they have in policing, it needs to be accessible for all. In an attempt to address this deficit in the context of care

givers and service users Strong and Hedges (2000) developed a model of involvement, building on the work of Arnstein which they used to inform and encourage the involvement of users and care givers in learning disability services. It has four levels of involvement ranging from 'no control' where information is given to the service user, and they have no influence at all through to 'full control' where power and control is shared with service users, and they can influence and determine outcomes.

The Scottish Government (2001) attempt to define three perspectives relating to public involvement, Firstly that public engagement is defined as a process to ensure democratic accountability, assisting in the decision-making process. Secondly that consumerism is defined as a process to encourage services to be more responsive to the public, and thirdly that public involvement is defined as a process of promoting active citizenship, and a more participative approach to decision making. These perspectives are interesting, with regard to shared decision making it is suggested that the police alone cannot decide what is best for the community, what the community needs, or what issues adults with learning difficulties have. Shared decision making would result in a more appropriate, responsive service.

In contrast to Arnstein's 'ladder' of participation, within which steps of engagement are expressed in the form of moving up a ladder, the International Association for Public Participation (2007) propose a participation 'spectrum', with the promise to inform citizens at one end of the continuum, and empower citizens at the other end (Myhill 2006, Evans 2010), the spectrum is shown in Figure 4 overleaf.

Figure 4: Continuum of Involvement.



	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Public Participation Goal	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities, and/or solutions	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives, and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	Work in partnership with the public in the decision making process including the development of plans.	To place the final decision making in the hands of the public.
Promise to Public	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations and provide feedback on how public involvement influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and ideas are directly reflected in issues which affect you and provide feedback on how public input influenced decisions and plans.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating plans and solutions to problems and incorporate your advice and recommendations into plans and decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.
Example Techniques	Fact sheets, web site, open houses.	Public comment, focus groups, surveys, public meetings.	Workshops, deliberate polling.	Citizen advisory, committees, consensus building, participatory decision-making.	Citizen juries, ballots, delegated decisions.

(International Association for Public Participation, 2007).

The continuum of involvement provided by the International Association for Public Participation (2007) shows a number of steps along a horizontal continuum, ranging from

providing information to the public at one end, to the empowerment of the public at the other, along with the promise that they will implement whatever the public decides. Whether the promise to implement decisions made by the public is appropriate or achievable for the police is debatable. As previously mentioned there may be situations when the police cannot act upon the public's needs. Once again it is felt that the police would need to consult all members of the community in the name of equality to ensure the decisions being implemented were indeed reflective of the entire community needs and desires. If the police do not engage with vulnerable members of the community, instead choosing to implement decisions of those in the community who are able to come forward to provide their views, they are further excluding and marginalising the vulnerable and are policing with a disjointed perception of community needs and priorities.

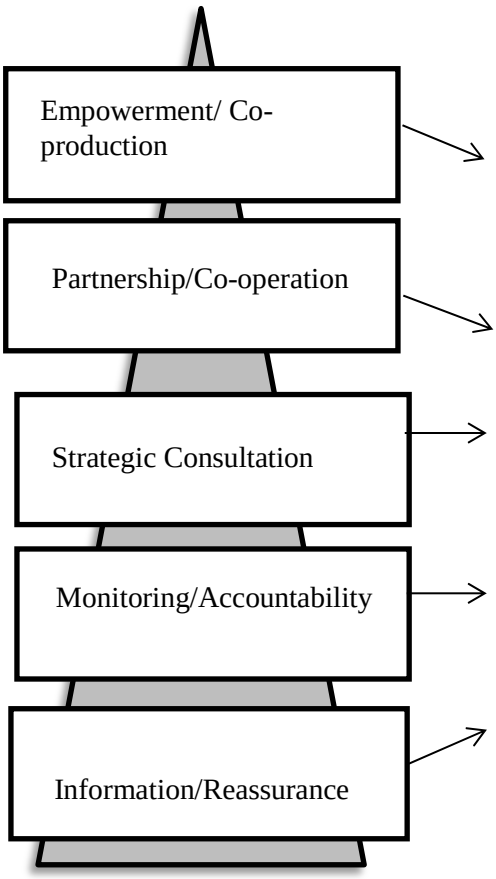
The International Association for Public Participation (2007) suggest this is one of the most useful models for displaying different levels of engagement and how they can increase along the continuum, which goes further than other models. Along with showing the level of involvement it also provides a description of what the organisation promises to the public, and the techniques that will be adopted to ensure they fulfil the promises made.

This model does not, however, give consideration to the complex issue of the power balance between the organisation and the groups/individuals concerned (Evans 2010), failing to clarify whether citizens are expected to move along the continuum or whether citizens can decide where they feel most comfortable, what level of involvement suits their needs and priorities, and where they would like to place themselves in this engagement process (Myhill 2006).

The models discussed thus far display clear steps in the process of engagement, however they were not designed with a unique service such as the police in mind. A typology for community engagement, introduced by Myhill (2006), which was designed specifically for

the public service that is policing, specifically tailored for this complex area of engagement is shown in figure 5.

Figure 5: Typology of Community Engagement for Policing.



Promise to Citizens	Possible Participation
You can take the final decision unless there is a clear justification preventing this.	Public-initiated, police supported, problem-solving initiatives
We will use your help, advice and expertise to the maximum possible extent.	Local action meetings; crime audits; special constabulary; volunteering.
We will keep you informed, adopt your priorities if possible, and provide feedback.	A range of consultation methods tailored to the needs and citizens and communities.
We will be transparent and accountable for the service we provide you.	Independent Advisory Groups; citizen monitoring of police complaints process.
We will make readily available balanced, objective information at a local level.	A range of information channels, tailored to the needs of citizens and communities.

(Myhill, 2006).

Myhill's typology needs to be flexible, it is suggested, in order for it to operate appropriately for both community groups and organisations and the individual citizen. The majority of people in the community will be situated at the bottom of the pyramid, if they decide they want to be engaged with the police at all. It is suggested that there will be members of the community that do not receive any level of reassurance from interaction with the police (Myhill 2006). It is believed that these members of the community will include potentially vulnerable people who are possibly in need of increased engagement as they face increased difficulties due to their potential vulnerability. These members of the community are in

danger of being marginalised. Whilst it is acknowledged that it is difficult to engage some sections of the community the police must recognise this situation and act in a proactive manner, seeking ways in which engagement can occur.

For the purpose of this study Arnstein's ladder of participation will be used in later chapters as the researcher felt this model allows for debate regarding the attitude of the service provider (in this case the police), and whether meaningful engagement can take place without their acceptance, or change in attitude. Myhill's typology, whilst being tailored specifically for policing, was felt to be a little too prescriptive for this study. The researcher favoured the flexibility that Arnstein's model provided.

2.5 Vulnerable Adults

It has already been stated that the communities that the police serve are heterogeneous (Somerville, 2011), therefore the police need to consider all sections of the community as there is a need to reach people in the community who are in danger of being marginalised, who are possibly vulnerable. In order for the police to attempt to engage the vulnerable, they need to understand them, and understand what can cause a person to be vulnerable.

This section will consider the variety of reasons why an adult, particularly an adult with learning difficulties may be deemed vulnerable. The Welsh Assembly Guidance, 'In Safe Hands' defines a vulnerable adult as a person, over the age of 18 who:

> *"Is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness and who is or may be unable to take care of himself or herself, or unable to protect himself or herself against harm or serious exploitation"*
> (Welsh Assembly Government, 2000:14).

The guidance continues to explain that adults with learning difficulties, mental health problems, the elderly or physically frail would be included in this definition, particularly if

their situation is compounded by additional factors, such as social or emotional problems, sensory impairment, physical frailty or chronic illness, poverty or homelessness (Welsh Assembly Government, 2000). This research study aims to discover the perceptions of adults with learning difficulties, therefore it was necessary to explore disability legislation.

2.5.1 Learning Disability Legislation

There are a number of important pieces of legislation in England and Wales that aim to promote the inclusion of adults with learning difficulties within mainstream services. The Human Rights Act (1998**)**, which came into force in October 2000, is a piece of legislation that adopted the European Convention of Human Rights into British law. The Act sets out eighteen articles which explain basic human rights, the right to life, prohibition of torture, and right to liberty and security to name a few. The Equality and Human Rights Commission, an enforcement body with responsibility for all forms of discrimination and human rights, was introduced by the Equality Act (2006). This is an important piece of legislation for all citizens in England and Wales however the extent to which adults with learning difficulties are encouraged to exercise their basic human rights is an important question. One of the articles that will be explored a little more carefully is article 13 – prohibition of discrimination which states that the rights and freedoms expressed by the Act shall be secured without discrimination. Learning disabilities is not named specifically in the list of grounds for discrimination but the non-exhaustive is preceded with the term 'such as' and ends with 'or other status'. The implication of this article to the police is that it places a legal obligation on them, alongside other public authorities to support not only support adults with learning difficulties, but to actively respect and uphold their basic human rights (Dimond, 2008).

The Mental Capacity Act 2005 Section 1(2) supports this notion, acknowledging that every person has the right to make their own decisions, and it must be assumed that every adult has the capacity to make do this, unless it can be proved otherwise. This piece of legislation clarifies who can make decisions on behalf of another, and in what circumstances this can be done (Rescare, 2014).

People who have learning difficulties face issues such as hate crime on a daily basis, breaching their basic human rights daily. It is suggested that often crimes against this potentially vulnerable section of our community are not investigated with vigour (Murphy and Clare, 2009), possibly on the grounds of the person's disability and perceived, potential inability to give evidence in court. This does not reflect the notion of Human Rights Act, Article 13, to prohibit discrimination.

The Mental Health Act 2007, which amends and updates the Mental Health Act 1983, provides a definition for mental disorder simply as any disorder or disability of the mind, which is broad enough to include those with learning disabilities. Section 1(2) however, explains that people with learning disabilities will not be considered as having a mental disorder unless they display abnormally aggressive or seriously irresponsible behaviour. Learning disability, in this act, is defined as arrested or incomplete development of mind and significant impairment of social functioning and intelligence. The police under Section 136 of the Mental Health Act 2007 can take someone from a public place to a place of safety providing they believe the person is in need of immediate care or control. The place of safety is defined as a mental health hospital, police cell, or accident and emergency department. During the detention of up to 72 hours the person should be assessed by a doctor and an approved mental health professional (Rescare, 2014).

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2008 introduced by the UN, that places an obligation on members to promote equal rights and eradicate discrimination, was seen as an important step in the long journey to change attitudes and prejudice towards disabled people. The Convention seeks to instil equality with regards to basic human rights.

Valuing People White Paper written by the Department of Health in 2001 introduces a new vision, which surrounds four key principles, rights; independence; choice and inclusion. Among the clear messages from this paper are the suggestions that people with learning disabilities, despite wanting to be part of society, are often excluded, unheard, marginalised and forgotten, and are more likely to receive poor quality services. A key component in the goal to achieve social inclusion for adults with learning difficulties is effective partnership working. Within this document, stronger local partnerships are actively encouraged, and described as fundamental to ensure inclusion takes place, which supports the view of Trojanowicz et al (2010) that the police function of engagement is enhanced by working alongside and with partners. Once again, the concept of working with partner agencies is presented in legislation, therefore it should not be unfamiliar to the police

In an attempt to realign the services offered by the National Health Service and other public services the Welsh Office (1983) introduced the 'All-Wales Strategy for the Development of Services for Mentally Handicapped People'. It had been recognised that people with disabilities and their families received little or no support to enable them to live independently, and a reliance on institutional care was evident. The strategy identified three main principles which it endeavoured to implement. Firstly that people with mental handicap should have the right to normal patterns of life within the community, secondly they have a right to be treated as individuals, and thirdly the requirement for additional help from professional services and the communities in which they live to ensure that are able to live

full lives as individuals. This strategy would appear to adopt the fundamental principles of the social model of disability as introduced by the UPIAS (UPIAS, 1976).

Further to this 'All Wales' strategy, the Welsh government set up a Learning Disability Advisory Group who compiled a report called 'Fulfilling the Promises' in 2001. The intention was for the advisory group to provide a service provision framework for people who have learning disabilities. The Learning Disability Advisory Group aspired to encompass all areas of a person's life within the framework, to include education, accommodation, training and development (life skills and lifelong learning), leisure and work. The vision and objectives for service provision were seeking to provide comprehensive and integrated services that will enable and support people with learning difficulties to be socially included in all aspects of their life, be empowered and independent, and that movements between services and organisations will be effortless. It also set out a requirement for partners to work in collaboration, ensuring the service they provide will be accessible to all, and will be delivered by competent, well-informed and well trained staff Welsh Government (2001).

2.5.2 Terminology Problems

Views vary regarding the use of terms such as learning 'difficulty' and learning 'disability' and which of these is more appropriate, this terminology debate is not a new phenomenon. Thomas and Woods (2003) discuss this predicament and agree that whilst views will vary, ultimately people should be referred to by name and not a label that can encompass many different ability levels.

It is suggested by some commentators that in order to gain some understanding of where people with learning difficulties find themselves in society today it is important to consider historical events and legislation. It can, however, be difficult to investigate past events if the

researcher employs the perspective of the present day, reflecting on their own values and assumptions. The researcher should take this into consideration (Porter and Lacey, 2005), and bracket views, opinions and assumptions appropriately.

During the early 1900's the Report of the Royal Commission on Care and Control of the Feebleminded (British Medical Journal, 1908) stated that 'mentally defective' would be a term used to describe any person of un-sound mind, considered incapable of managing their own affairs. The report provides significant evidence that members of the community who are perhaps more vulnerable faced marginalisation in the early 1900's, discussing circumstances where people should not be included in society, as they were in need of care and control. This section of our communities, described as 'mentally defective' would include the following:

- Any person considered mentally infirm through their age or a decaying of their faculties.
- Any person deemed defective from birth or an early age, referred to in the report as an 'idiot', who may be unable to look after themselves or protect themselves from danger.
- Any person who despite being able to protect themselves from danger is unable to earn a living, referred to as 'imbeciles'.
- Any person who is able to work but unable to compete on equal terms with other 'normal' fellows, referred to as the 'feeble-minded'.
- Any person who displays a mental defect along with criminal tendencies, on which punishment has no deterrent effect, referred to as 'moral imbeciles'.

This is early evidence that members of the community faced marginalisation. It is important for a researcher to remember that times and perspectives change, terms that may be quite

derogatory, may have been less so at the time these reports were written (British Medical Journal, 1908).

Later, The Mental Deficiency Act (1913) was introduced with the primary aim of committing people who were considered to be 'mental defectives' into large, isolated, rural institutions, and therefore remove them from the community. Terms such as 'mental incurables', 'feeble-minded idiots', 'moral imbeciles' and 'loose morals' are used in this Act. At this time it was not unusual for a person to be committed to an institution following a one-off anti-social act.

The Mental Deficiency Act (1927) saw a turning point in the care of the 'mentally sub-normal', to care provided outside of the institutions (Concannon, 2005).

The Royal Commission on the Law Relating to Mental Illness and Mental Deficiency (1953) questioned the educational opportunities; care facilities and release opportunities available to people with mental deficiency (Dimopoulos, 2010). Whilst the ideas in this report are positive and uplifting as it talks about guarding people's rights to the fullest and most useful life, guaranteeing maximum freedom and support for families, the terminology used could still be perceived as negative and discriminatory if today's perspective were to be applied. Terminology such as 'idiot', 'imbecile', and 'feeble-minded' and suggesting there are unspoken demands being put on society is still evident and detract from the afore mentioned positive tone of the report (Thomas and Woods, 2003).

More recent legislation in the 1970s used terms such as 'mentally handicapped', implying an inability to look after themselves, and a need for support. In 1972 the British Institute of Mental Subnormality was formed, now known as the British Institute of Learning Disabilities (BILD). In the 1980s a term often used by those in power was 'people with mental handicap', this was the first time that the word 'people' was used, something of a move forward. The mid 1980s saw the introduction of the advocacy movement, with organisations

such as ‘People First’ giving people with learning difficulties a voice and platform/support to engage with others.

As previously discussed, views vary regarding the use of the terms ‘disability’ or ‘difficulty’. Groups such as ‘People First’ prefer the term difficulty as they want to communicate the notion that their support needs will change over time. A person’s need for support can differ depending on the environment they are in, for example, if they are in a place where they feel comfortable, their support needs could be low, whereas in a strange environment, where they may feel a little nervous, their support needs can be high. This varying level of support can differ from the support needed by person with a physical disability, whose needs are almost always the same. People First believe that a positive approach would be to offer good support to a person who has a learning difficulty so that they can become more independent, and a negative approach would be to try and ‘cure’ the person (People First, 2011).

Mencap (2012b) chose not to use the term ‘difficulty’ as this would more appropriately describe a ‘learning difficulty’ such as dyslexia, unlike a ‘learning disability’ which affects a person’s intellect. A learning difficulty cannot be overcome by treatment, as can a mental health problem.

The National Health Service and Community Care Act (1990) does not use ‘disability’ or ‘difficulty’, instead preferring the generalised term of ‘vulnerable’ (Thomas and Woods, 2003).

The use of what are perceived today as derogatory terms in past legislation could in part, explain why people with learning difficulties appear to be marginalised by society today. If the historical example being set by the government is to exclude and ostracise this section of the society, it can be difficult to expect the general public to hold a different opinion.

2.5.3 Disability

The definition of a vulnerable adult, according to The Welsh Government (2000) includes adults with learning difficulties. A learning difficulty can reduce a person's ability to understand complex or new information, or to learn new skills (impaired intelligence), therefore reducing the person's ability to cope independently, thus impairing their social function (Department of Health, 2001; Mencap, 2012b). A person's vulnerability and the level of support they receive can vary according to the level of difficulty they experience.

In order to understand learning difficulties, Mencap (2012a) provide information that explains a learning difficulty occurs whilst the brain is still developing. This can happen when a baby is born prematurely; during birth if the baby is starved of oxygen or after birth if they suffer from a childhood illness. In some cases the diagnosis can be made at the time of birth, or perhaps during routine health checks if delays are noticed in the child's development by a health professional in the early months. Sadly for some people a diagnosis is not made for many years, some people may never receive a diagnosis at all. It is possible that a person can receive a diagnosis of learning difficulty without a specific cause being identified (Mencap, 2012a).

Learning difficulties vary considerably. A person with a mild learning difficulty may be able to communicate easily and look after themselves independent of any assistance. It may just take them longer to learn new skill sets. It could possibly be difficult for a police officer to identify or recognise a person's vulnerability if the learning difficulty is mild (Mencap, 2012a). The difficulties associated with the recognition of some mild learning difficulties further support the need for the police and other agencies to become proactive in the engagement of this section of the community. With a joined up, intelligent approach potentially vulnerable people can be identified, affording opportunities to engage. It is

important that the police are able to identify a person with a learning difficulty so that the appropriate level of support can be offered.

Adults with more severe difficulties or additional physical or emotional conditions, who have possibly received more than one diagnosis such as Down's syndrome, cerebral palsy or autism may not be able to communicate verbally (NHS, 2009; Mencap, 2012a). A person with profound and multiple learning disabilities may have complex health needs, and will have more than one disability, or a profound learning disability, and possibly additional sensory and physical disabilities. They can experience great difficulty in communicating. High levels of support are needed with most aspects of their lives, their behaviour may be challenging to society (Mencap, 2012a).

A person who has a learning disability will generally be treated differently by society. Facing challenges and prejudice every day they do not have the same control over their lives as the rest of society. Less than one in five people with learning disabilities work, compared to one in two physically disabled people (Mencap, 2012a). The majority of people with learning disabilities want to work and those that do are generally low paid and part time. Eight out of ten people with learning disabilities have experienced bullying as a child and felt they were socially excluded (Mencap, 2012a).

There are approximately 1,750,000 people in Britain who have a mild learning difficulty and possibly a further 350,000 who have a severe learning difficulty (Sharma, 2004). According to the Welsh Government (2009) there were 14,100 people on register who had a learning disability, 12,300 of these live in community placement, approximately 7,300 of these were living with parents or family members, the remaining people were living in lodgings or in supported living.

With regards to the term disability, the Equality and Human Rights Commission (2010:9) provide the following definition:

> *"Someone who has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities, including people with recurring or fluctuating condition such as depression, HIV, cancer and multiple sclerosis"*
> (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2010:9).

They do acknowledge that some people who fit this definition, people with mental health problems or deaf people for example, do not consider themselves to be disabled (Equality and Human Rights Commission 2010).

A number of models of disability have been discussed over the years in an attempt to understand how disability is perceived. Two such models have been of great influence to modern thoughts regarding disability; they are the medical model of disability and the social model of disability, these will be explored further.

2.5.4 The Medical Model of Disability

The medical model of disability defines people by their medical condition, illness, or medical diagnosis which is used to determine their access to housing education, leisure, employment, and benefits. This model views disabled people as being in need of care or cure, and dependent on others, systematically excluding them from society. This model believes that people with disabilities possess the problem, not society, and if they can they need to change or adapt, making an extra effort not to inconvenience others. This model does not consider that society needs to change (The Open University, 2006; University of Leicester, 2012).
An example of the medical approach to disability would be a course tutor who refuses to hand out notes in larger font for a visually impaired student, resulting in the student being unable to take part in discussions.

The control is with the professionals, and any choices that an individual has are limited to the options provided and approved by the expert, who is there to 'help' (Centre for Inclusive Learning Support, 2012). Table 3, on page 57, illustrates the views/opinions of the medical model of disability. The medical model of disability, it is suggested, leads to low self-esteem; poor education, undeveloped life skills, and consequent high unemployment levels (Centre for Inclusive Learning Support, 2012).

2.5.5 The Social Model of Disability

The medical model of disability is strongly rejected by organisations that work with disabled people, indeed over the past thirty years or so the 'social' model of disability has been promoted and encouraged. This social model, described by some as an emancipatory force in the lives of many (Oliver, 1992), does not see disability as the fault of the individual. It believes that the way society is organised and the barriers that exist in society discriminate against disabled people and people with impairments, excluding them from participating in society, causing them to feel disabled. Disabled people are at a disadvantage because of the institutional discrimination they face (Centre for Inclusive Learning Support, 2012).
Table 2 overleaf provides examples of barriers in society.

Table 2 Barriers in Society.

Barrier	Characteristics
Environmental/Physical	Environmental barriers are the physical barriers in society, for example, the absence of a wheelchair ramp which would prevent access to a building, therefore excluding a wheelchair user from the building.
Attitudinal	Attitudinal barriers are present in the attitudes of people in society, evident in incidents of hate crime, harassment. These attitudinal barriers can make a person with learning difficulties feel vulnerable.
Institutional	Institutional barriers present themselves when organisations fail to organise itself appropriately, for example, a lack of information made available for victims of crime informing them about reporting disability hate crime.

(Davies, 2010).

Environmental or physical barriers affect those members of society who have mobility concerns. In cases where the needs of these members of our community are not met by an organisation the perception may be that the organisation or institution are not concerned with their needs and are willingly marginalising them (Strange and Banning, 2001).

Institutional barriers are found when an organisation fails to address the needs of a particular group of people, often a minority group. In order to remove this barrier an organisation must begin to address the needs and improve the service they offer to this section of the community (Nichols and Quaye, 2008).

Attitudinal barriers are often evident because of a belief that people with a difficulty or impairment are unable to do certain things (Walmsley, 2010). These attitudes are more difficult to remove, as they are often deeply ingrained (Nichols and Quaye, 2008).

The Union of the Physically Impaired against Segregation (UPIAS) pronounced fundamental principles that they and the Disability Alliance were in full agreement. They stated that disability is caused by social conditions that need to be eliminated, and that disabled people should assume control over their lives with the help and advice of others, this ownership should be promoted by professionals, experts and others who seek to help (UPIAS, 1976). During the 1980s professionals were urged to consider the social model of disability, which became the mainstay of disability equality training within organisations, indeed many claim allegiance to the social model outlook (Thomas, 2002). Furthermore it developed into the channel through which disabled people's movements began to emerge. Whilst it is recognised that through disabled people's movements and campaigns many barriers have been broken down, such as access to public buildings, it would appear some barriers prove a little more difficult to remove. Oliver (2013) suggests that education and employment are areas in which barriers are more intractable. Oliver continues to suggest that the social model of disability received some criticism initially from disability charities, however many of these now see the social model of disability as central to their ethos. The social model continues to meet criticism, according to Oliver (2013), for two reasons. Firstly the social model has no place for impairment, and secondly it doesn't take into account 'differences' presenting disabled as a single entity. It is suggested that disabled communities are much more complex due to different race, gender, age and sexuality for example. It is argued that criticisms such as these will only achieve a detraction from the important messages of the social model of disability, and are unlikely to result in the development of new models (Oliver, 2013).

The social model suggests that the cure for disability is the restructuring of society. Discrimination can be eliminated if there is a removal of the organisational, physical and attitudinal barriers in society (Centre for Inclusive Learning Support, 2012). Society needs to change, not the individual, there is a need to encourage society to be more inclusive,

empowering disabled people. Therefore the social model declares that society is the problem (The Open University 2006; University of Leicester, 2012, The Office for Disability Issues, 2012).

An example of the social approach to disability would be a course tutor who holds a meeting with a visually impaired student at the start of a course in order to discover how the notes can be adapted, so that the student can read them and ultimately is able to take part in discussions. Table 3 outlines the differences between the two models of disability.

Table 3: The Medical Model of Disability Vs the Social Model of Disability.

Medical Model	Social Model
Disability is a 'personal tragedy'	Disability is the experience of social oppression
Disability is a personal problem	Disability is a social problem
Medicalisation is the 'cure'	Self-help groups and systems benefit disabled people enormously
Professional dominance	Individual and collective responsibility
Expertise is held by the (qualified) professionals	Expertise is the experience of disabled people
The disabled person must adjust	The disabled person should receive affirmation
'The Disabled' have an individual identity	Disabled people have a collective identity
Disabled people need care	Disabled people need rights
Professionals are in control	Disabled people should make their own choices
Disability is a policy issue	Disability is a political issue
Individual adaptations	Social change

(Centre for Inclusive Learning Support, 2012).

Advocates of the social model of disability believe that the barriers that prevent equality and inclusion need to be removed. Utopia would be the removal of social oppression and exclusion completely.

2.5.6 Social Inclusion

It is acknowledged that in almost all social situations, people with learning difficulties can feel less powerful than people who do not have learning difficulties, and it is the case that adults with learning difficulties often find themselves marginalised or socially excluded from society (Riddell et al, 2001). Sheppard (2006:7) defines social exclusion as:

> *"The dynamic process of being shut out, fully or partially, from any of the social, economic, political and cultural systems which determine the social integration of the person in society"*
>
> (Sheppard, 2006:7)

Pierson (2010) suggests that individuals and indeed entire communities are in danger of being socially excluded due to a variety of reasons, including poverty, low income; poor social supports and networks; exclusion from services and the effect of the local area/neighbourhood. It is for reasons such as these that the Department of Health (2001) in their 'Valuing People' report state that 'inclusion' is one of the key principles laid out by the government for future service provision for people who have learning disabilities.

There does not appear to be much research into the social inclusion of people with learning or intellectual disabilities from their own perspective with a view to gaining their perceptions of the barriers that exist in society and their suggestions of remedies (Abbott and McConkey, 2006). This research hopes to provide some insight into this phenomenon.

It is important to understand that in order to attempt to prevent social exclusion, it is necessary to seek the views and opinions of potentially marginalised members of society, such as people with learning difficulties. In spite of the challenges associated with the engagement of people with learning difficulties in social research (Brewster, 2004), it is very

much possible for a researcher to create an environment of understanding, mutual respect and trust which can bring about positive outcomes for participants (Manning, 2010). Growing numbers of adults in our communities are displaying a desire to engage and to become included in community activities (O Rourke et al, 2004).

It is suggested that adults with mild to moderate learning difficulties who are actively involved in self-advocacy groups and organisations may believe that the power ultimately lies with support workers who are employed to provide assistance to members of the groups. This may in part be because the support workers are responsible for the management of the organisations finances or the interpretation of inaccessible written material (Goodley, 2000). The researcher in this study felt that any issues over perceived power could be effectively managed by providing adequate information about the research and why it was being carried out. All participants in this study had mild learning difficulties and the support workers were confident that they would understand the process. Their presence alone contributed to putting participants at ease.

Researchers should consider various reasons why a participant with learning difficulties may feel reluctant to express their true opinions and views. They may fear repercussions, have a history of bad experiences in education establishments, there may be a possibility of previous experiences of abuse. As previously discussed, they may view the researcher as a person who wields power in their lives, therefore they feel the need to 'do the right thing' and be willing to do anything they can to please the researcher. There is also the possibility that this may cause a participant to exhibit challenging behaviour in an attempt to gain control. These factors need to be carefully considered as they can contribute to an unusual research dynamic between the respondents and researcher. There is a real need for the researcher to develop a relationship of trust with people with learning difficulties with a view to developing a

research relationship that does not abuse the position of relative power (University of Sheffield, 2013).

The subject of social inclusion is of vital importance given the potential vulnerabilities of this section of our community. Issues such as hate crime are of concern, although the true extent of this problem is far from known.

2.6 Hate Crime

Hate crime is a relatively recent term that has received societal concern but it is suggested by Hall (2013) that as hate is a natural and normal part of being a human being then it would seem logical to propose that acts/incidents of a violent and discriminatory manner that have been motivated by prejudice attitudes and hatred have a long history. Hall continues to evoke the notion that hate crime is a complex phenomenon and in order to gain a deeper understanding of it consideration should be given to a variety of definitions.

A hate crime incident is defined by Voice UK (2012) as any crime or incident which is perceived to be committed

> *"…where the perpetrator's prejudice against an identifiable group of people is a factor in determining who is victimised"*
>
> (Voice UK, 2012).

Commonly, a hate crime is understood to manifest itself in hostile actions against individuals with certain characteristic and is thought to be the result of contempt, hatred and hostility towards a particular group (Scope, 2008). The victim may not have a personal relationship with the perpetrator but they may well live within the same community. Thomas (2012) suggests hate crime can involve street crime, physical assault and criminal damage to residencies. Scope (2008) suggest that hate crime can come in other forms also, such as threat of attack, verbal abuse, harassment, graffiti, bullying, vandalism, malicious complaints, kidnap, rape, torture and murder.

Furthermore, Voice UK suggest, any incident or crime, which is motivated or perceived to be because of a person's disability, or perceived disability (whether this perception is by the victim or somebody else) will be classed as a 'Disability Hate Crime'. This includes people who are targeted because of their physical disability, learning disability, mental health, or sensory impairment (Voice UK, 2012; Scope 2008). Disability Hate Crime was first recognised in the Criminal Justice Act 2003, which became law in April 2005, it does not make hate crime a separate offence but does create a sentencing provision. This provision places a duty on the courts in cases where offences are aggravated by hostility towards the victim because of their sexual orientation or disability to increase the sentence (Scope, 2008).

Where disabled people are concerned, hate crime is an extreme realisation of discrimination and prejudice. Scope (2008:8) suggest that this prejudice be given the name 'disablism' and defined it as:

> *"Discriminatory, aggressive, or abusive behaviour arising from the belief that disabled people are inferior to other people"*
>
> (Scope, 2008:8)

Hate crime is not the only way that disablism can show itself, it can manifest itself in many ways but Scope (2008) claim that hate crime is the most shocking example of it.

The Disability Rights Commission (2007) state that nine out of ten people with learning difficulties have experienced a hate crime, which can be 'uniquely destructive and unsettling' as the victim is targeted specifically because of a core-characteristic of their identity (McLaughlin and Muncie 2006) and out of sheer hostility (Panorama, 2010).

Adults with learning difficulties are easy targets for crime, and few cases are reported to the police, of the ones that are reported, few reach court, and of the ones that do reach court, few result in a conviction (Gillen 2009). Every person who has had a crime committed against

them has a right to seek justice, some however, may need extra support to enable them to do so. Mencap held an inquiry in 1999 into the victimization, harassment and bullying of people with a learning disability, the results identified that only 17% of the people who participated in the research had reported crimes committed against them to the police (Sharp 2001). It is suggested that the low amount of prosecutions are due to low levels of reporting and the fact that people with learning difficulties are socially isolated and fear repercussions if they do report crimes to the police (Kelly, 2008).

There are many reasons why a person with learning difficulties may not feel able to report a crime to the police. It may be that they have had a bad experience with the police before, or feel that the police won't believe them and they lack confidence (Scott et al, 2009; Learning Disability Wales, 2010). These reasons, in conjunction with a general lack of understanding of their human rights (Berzins et al, 2003; Mind, 2007, Clement et al, 2011) can prevent a person coming forward. They may also have been advised by others to ignore the incident, perhaps there are issues regarding the relationship between the perpetrator of the crime and the victim. If the victim is dependent on the perpetrator or there is an unequal power balance they may feel unable to report a crime for fear of repercussions.

Gerstenfeld (2004) states there are a number of further reasons as to why a person with learning difficulties may not want to report the crime to the police, these being a lack of understanding and knowledge as to what a hate crime is, and how the law is applied in relation to such crimes; a denial by the victim that a hate crime has occurred; a feeling of shame; a social or cultural belief that they should not complain about their misfortune; a lack of understanding or knowledge of how to report the crime; or perhaps an inability to communicate their victimisation.

People who have experienced hate crime have suggested that there is little or no information available to them about where they could go for help to report the crime, others described

frustration that they were not kept informed once a crime had been reported, case notes were lost, and evidence dismissed. The result of these shortcomings was that offenders were not brought to justice (Davies 2010).

Hate crimes often start with small incidents and what could possibly be referred to as 'low-level' incidents such as name calling. Learning Disability Wales (2010) suggest that these low-level incidents often escalate to threats, damage to a person's property and even murder. Hate crimes such as name calling, verbal abuse, physical attack, harassment, criminal damage and arson all contribute to the victim feeling more disabled (Why do you hate me?, 2010) and violated (Weiss, 1992). Indeed a person who experiences hate crime can find it difficult to cope with feeling victimised (Garofalo and Martin, 1993), this can lead to post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), high levels of distress, sleep disorders, withdrawal, depression, feelings of helplessness and interpersonal problem (Herek and Berrill, 1992; Weiss, 1992).

It is suggested that adults with learning difficulties who suffer hate crime may restructure the way they live their lives in order to find a way to cope. Often a victim of hate crime who has a learning difficulty view the crime as part of their everyday life, or mistaking it for anti-social behaviour. The term 'hate crime', it is suggested, is too strong, and they don't believe this has happened to them (Learning Disability Wales, 2010). In fairness to adults with learning difficulties there are many words such as bullying, harassment, abuse, theft, intimidation, robbery, prejudice, that are used to describe disability hate crime, therefore it can become confusing. It is important that vulnerable adults are given the help they need to recognise a disability hate crime, and the necessary support to report such crimes to the police so that they can live their lives free from harm (Learning Disability Wales, 2010).

Some people who experience hate crime move away from the area where they live in order to escape hate crime, whilst this may bring some initial relief to the victim, it often brings

feelings of exasperation as the harassment/hate crime may begin in the new area (Berzins et al, 2005).

Hate crimes against adults with learning difficulties may also have an impact on the families of victims, as well as the wider community, as others with learning difficulties who witness the harassment may feel afraid, perhaps restricting how they live their lives because of a fear that they too will become victims (Clement et al, 2011).

Some victims may wish to ignore the problems, perhaps accepting it as the norm. It is suggested by Scope (2008) that because the bullying of disabled children at school age is common and frequently unchallenged, the foundation is laid for a continuation of this harassment and disrespect in adulthood, therefore becoming a part of everyday life to the victim. Often victims are advised to ignore incidents, perhaps to prevent a risk of repeat attacks.

Alternatively it may be the case that a person faced with hate crime/disability hate crime will feel the need to react and take action, sometimes resulting in the victim being viewed as a perpetrator (Mind, 2007), which may result in the victim getting into trouble themselves. One of the significant factors of a hate crime is that the victim is chosen by the perpetrator because of hostility towards them.

All public authorities have a duty under the Disability Equality Duty to consider disability-related harassment, although it was acknowledged by the Equality and Human Rights Commission that there was no definition for this term. The commission suggested that disability-related harassment is conduct against disabled people which is often exploitative, abusive, unwanted, and this conduct is designed to violate the safety, security, dignity or autonomy of the person; to create an offensive, degrading, hostile environment. This conduct can be aimed at the disabled person, their family, friends or associates, and can include

conduct towards a person perceived to be disabled (Equality and Human Rights Commission 2010).

There are a number of issues that need attention, if incidents are dealt with effectively it may prevent an escalation in their seriousness, and could possibly divert the offender. Not dealing effectively with hate crimes can have a wider effect on the local community, affecting community cohesion, levels of confidence in police and reduce levels of safety. This could be a contributory factor to the significant under-reporting of hate crimes, possibly due to lack of confidence in the police, and a fear that it will not be dealt with sensitively (Ilston, 2009). The police have a duty and responsibility to recognise hate crimes under equality legislation, it is a victim's right. Better relationships with partner agencies are necessary to facilitate better information sharing (Giannasi 2010). If agencies work together there would be increased opportunity for potentially vulnerable people to be identified and engaged in order to possibly prevent, or identify hate crime. Failure to do so will result in different agencies acting independently, if at all, possibly assuming that the welfare of vulnerable people is being taken care of by another agency, allowing opportunities for potentially vulnerable people to slip through the net.

2.7 Vulnerable Adults within the Criminal Justice System

Adults with learning difficulties are more likely to have some vulnerability which can mean they are at risk of being disadvantaged when they find themselves in contact with the criminal justice system. As there is a higher risk of crimes being committed against adults with learning difficulties it is suggested that additional measures are necessary when dealing with vulnerable victims and witnesses, both at the investigation stage and during the court process (Murphy and Clare, 2009; Anon, 2008a). Indeed Murphy and Clare (2009) suggest that often crimes against vulnerable adults are not investigated vigorously, possibly due to a

belief that the victim would be unable to give evidence in court, or there may be concern that the process that the person would have to go through to seek justice could result in further traumatisation. Stone (2008) believes that adults with learning difficulties are less likely to bring offenders to justice than adults without learning difficulties. The reason for this Stone suggests is due to vulnerable adults not being treated as equal citizens.

Anon (2008b) suggests that the police need to possess specialist investigation skills in order to provide a high level of service to the vulnerable, and that the police should not take a single agency approach. It is advised that an alternative to working in isolation would be improved partnership working with other agencies, such as Social Services, Local Council, Housing Association, Local Health Board. The purpose of a multi-agency approach is to ensure effective information sharing that will ultimately result in greater protection of the vulnerable. It is believed that prompt action following a crime against a vulnerable adult can mean the difference between a possible conviction and allowing such incidents/offences to continue unnoticed.

2.7.1 Interviewing

When the police interview a vulnerable adult it may be possible that a written statement cannot be taken. An alternative to a written statement, if necessary a video interview could take place. During a video interview specially trained officers record the interview in the person's own words, rather than the officer writing down their perception of what the interviewee is saying. This recording can be used in court instead of the victim/witness having to appear in court in person (Anon, 2008a). Allowing an individual to give their statement in this way is demonstrating a willingness on the part of the Criminal Justice System to ensure vulnerable people have equal access to justice, promoting the social model of disability by adjusting the process sufficiently to allow social inclusion.

2.7.2 Special Measures

The court system, it may be argued has failed vulnerable adults with learning difficulties in the past, often labelling them as unreliable witnesses as they may have been unable to cope with answering questions or cross examination. For these reasons it is important that vulnerable adults are supported and allowed the opportunity to have equal access to justice. This equal access to the criminal justice system is vitally important whether the vulnerable adult be a victim, witness or a suspect (Stone, 2008). There are a multitude of special measures available to a court when it is necessary for a vulnerable person to give evidence in court as a result of the Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999 (Home Office, 2002; Anon, 2008a; Grant et al, 2010). The officers investigating the case will make arrangements and apply to the court for special measures. (Grant et al, 2010; Murphy and Clare, 2009; Anon, 2008a). These special measures can include:

- Video recorded evidence – as previously mentioned, the main body of evidence can be video-recorded and played in court in cases where the witness is unable to provide a written statement due to disability or illness. This negates the need for the witness to appear in court to provide their evidence. It would be necessary, however, for further considerations to be made when the witness needs to be cross-examined by the defence.
- Screens around the witness box – this protects the witness from seeing the defendant, which may make the experience of giving evidence a little less stressful.
- Evidence via live-link – the witness can give evidence via a live television link from another room outside the court room. They will be able to see everything that is going on in the court room and the courtroom can see them via the link.
- Evidence given in private – this can take place if the public gallery is cleared.

- Removal of wigs and gowns – the judge and lawyers in the court will remove their gowns and wigs in an attempt to ensure the atmosphere in the court room is less intimidating for the vulnerable witness.
- Use of communication aids – such as an alphabet board to facilitate communication.
- Examination through an intermediary occurs when a person is appointed to assist the witness give their evidence.

(Murphy and Clare, 2009).

In addition to these special measures, there are a number of roles within the criminal justice system that are specifically designed for supporting vulnerable people. These are supporters, intermediaries and appropriate adults (Stone, 2008).

A pre-trial supporter is often a Victim Support volunteer who provides the witness with support in between the original interview and the start of the trial.

The purpose of a court witness supporter is to sit near the witness in the court room or in the video link room to provide support. It may be that their presence during evidence giving provides sufficient support or that they are required to provide reassurance beforehand or during the breaks. The supporter can explain the process and what is happening (Stone, 2008).

There are many people who can become a supporter for a vulnerable witness, such as a friend, relative, advocate, specialist support worker, social worker provided they have no connection with the case (Stone, 2008).

An intermediary is a person who works for the court, their role is to act as an independent link between the court and the witness during pre-trial preparation. They do not act as an investigator, advocate, supporter, or appropriate adult.

The special measures outlined are significant steps towards enabling a person with a learning difficulty to access the court system and give evidence in a way that would minimise further

harm, however it is suggested that the process of enabling this section of the community to seek justice needs to begin a lot sooner in the process, with improvements to the engagement process in general.

2.7.3 Identifying People who may be Vulnerable

The identification of a person with learning difficulties can be problematic, the levels of difficulty can vary considerably. It has been suggested that insufficient numbers of police officers have received the specialist training necessary to enable them to recognise a learning difficulty, and how a person with learning difficulties should be supported, if they successfully identify a difficulty is present (Gillen, 2009; Burton et al, 2006). In some forces less than 1% of officers have the specialist knowledge needed and the majority of officers would not feel confident that they could identify a victim of crime with a learning difficulty or mental health problem (Gillen, 2009; Burton et al, 2006). This is another consideration in addition to Cordner's comments regarding community engagement (2013). Training needs to be sufficient so that police officers are able to recognise potential vulnerability.

Kathryn Stone, Chief Executive of Voice UK states

> *"Although we are incredibly disappointed with these findings, we are not surprised. Voice UK regularly deals with people with learning disabilities whose treatment by the police falls well short of expected standards…it was a whole contradiction that there is a huge shift towards victim care and yet you get a very patchy response from police. Some forces are fantastic but with others you wonder why they are involved in the work"*
>
> (Gillen 2009).

The lack of training and possible understanding by some forces is a cause for concern, as adults with learning difficulties have an equal right to equal treatment within the criminal justice system. It is suggested that any inequality in treatment effectively results in adults with learning difficulties being denied the opportunity to see those who have committed crimes against them being brought to justice. For too long people with learning difficulties have been regarded by the criminal justice system as being unreliable witnesses (Gillen

2009). Hughes (2001:13) discussed the problem of vulnerable adults not being considered reliable as witnesses and that:

> *"…understandably the police are often reluctant to become involved and to make things more difficult the Crown Prosecution Service may be unlikely to take the case forward"*
> (Hughes 2001:13).

Often it is only with pressure from advocates or social workers that the obstacles or barriers put in place by the police or the CPS can be overcome (Hughes 2001). The Director of Respond, Richard Curen (cited in Gillen 2009) states that this issue should be addressed with the 'utmost urgency'.

Kitson (cited in Gillen 2009) calls for specialist training for all police officers which would enable them to effectively communicate with people who have learning disabilities as these are members of the communities that are more likely to become victims of crime.

The government recognised this issue of vulnerable victims not being protected, and they implemented the Home Office Report 'Speaking up for justice' (Hughes 2001). The report's aim was to make improvements, enabling vulnerable adults and children better access to justice, acknowledging the need for early identification of a vulnerable person at an early stage in the investigation process so that person can receive the appropriate support (Home Office 1998). It could be said that this is equally important for a suspect with a learning disability; the Prison Reform Trust in their 'Prisoner's Voices' report suggest that the Criminal Justice System is failing to eliminate discrimination. They discovered that half the people with a learning disability claimed they had been ill-treated by officers and some felt they had been manipulated during interview without an appropriate adult being present (Anon 2008a).

Voice UK is a national charity, which offers support to people who have learning disabilities, and other people who have experienced abuse or crime that may be considered vulnerable. They also offer support to the families, carers and professional workers who may be affected.

There are a selection of training courses on offer with Voice UK, aimed at providing positive, practical information regarding adult protection to the health service, police, criminal justice system, education and voluntary sector (Voice UK 2011).

Similarly, 'Respond' is a national organisation who aim to provide people with learning disabilities, who have experienced any kind of trauma or abuse, with effective and flexible support, to help them improve their lives. Respond offer psychotherapy, advocacy, and campaigns, such as their disability hate crime campaign, among other support. They also offer training, consultancy and carry out research, all with the aim to prevent abuse (Respond 2011).

The Ann Craft Trust (ACT) is a similar organisation, founded in 1992 to protect adults and children from sexual abuse. Approximately 60% of adults with learning disabilities have suffered some kind of abuse at some point in their lives. ACT campaigns to ensure that organisations that work with people who have learning difficulties are fully aware of protection and abuse issues, raising professional awareness and increasing the knowledge and skills of professionals with a view to reduce the risk of abuse and support those who have been abused. ACT work with a variety of organisations such as, social services, health professionals, direct support staff, the police, Crown Prosecution Service, and parents and carers. They offer training, seminars, conferences and workshops delivering programmes on issues such as supporting victims and working with offenders, investigative interviewing, and safeguarding vulnerable adults. Along with carrying out research, they offer advice and information, which is free and often used by parents and carers as well as professionals (Ann Craft Trust (2010).

Another UK charity, Mencap, works with people who have learning disabilities, seeking to challenge prejudice, and change services and laws, claiming to be

"*The voice of learning disability"*

(Mencap 2011).

Support is offered to people with learning difficulties who want to take a college course, get a job or find somewhere to live, and be part of the communities that they live in. They offer advice regarding budgets, transport services, respite care and leisure groups (Mencap 2011). There is an organisation which aims to achieve the same things as the organisations previously discussed but is run by people with learning difficulties. People First aim to raise awareness of the rights of people with learning difficulties. The social model of disability is the philosophy that People First promote, this means they believe that society needs to change in order for disabled people to be included, suggesting that disabled people should not have to change in order to fit in with society. They strongly oppose the medical model of disability which means if you have a disability you need to change and adapt to fit in with society. People First seek to have the labels, such as 'disability' and 'difficulty', which make them feel different to everyone else removed. For example, People First believe that traditionally, a person who has a learning difficulty has been labelled as 'different', as a child would be sent to a special school, and later in their lives may find themselves grouped in with others who have learning difficulties in 'group homes' and encouraged to attend day centres together. People First argue that individuals should have the freedom to choose where they live, and where they go. They may prefer to live alone or perhaps with a partner (People First, 2011).

The plethora of organisations listed here are all working towards related goals, to provide advocacy, support and protection to this potentially vulnerable section of the community. It is suggested that valuable information about how to engage this section of the community can be gleaned from organisations such as these. It is probable that most organisations would welcome wholeheartedly a proactive policing strategy regarding community engagement.

2.7.4 Victim Support

The Ministry of Justice in their 'Code of Practice for Victims of Crime (2013) state that all victims of crime should be offered a referral to an organisation for victim support. Victims should have their needs assessed and supported throughout their journey through the criminal justice system, and if necessary for as long as support is needed (Police and Crime Commissioner, 2014). Victims should also be kept informed of progress in police investigations, for instance when a suspect is being interviewed under caution, arrested or charged and any bail conditions (Ministry of Justice, 2013).

The Victim Support organisation is a national charity that have provided victims and witnesses support and advice for over 35 years, during this time they have supported over 25 million victims of crime. The support that they offer is available to victims of crime, witnesses, family members, friends and anyone who has been affected by crime. Historically, the majority of referrals to Victim Support have come from the police, but anybody can contact the organisation and request support. Upon first contact with Victim Support a Victim Care Officer will ask questions in order to determine what has happened to the person and how it has made them feel. If the victim/witness wants support then a 'help plan' will be put together specifically for the victim. This could offer emotional support, practical help or information and can be provided over the phone or during face-to-face visits, working with other charities and organisations to ensure the most appropriate support for each victim is provided (Victim Support, 2014).

The Victim Support organisation also provide a witness service to people who have witnessed a crime, who require help coping with the prospect of going to court. They will talk to witnesses in confidence about how they feel before giving evidence in a trial, providing information about what to expect in court, arranging pre-trial court visits if

necessary. A volunteer from Victim Support will also be available to attend court with the witness to provide moral support (Victim Support, 2014).

The assistance that can be offered by Victim Support organisation is extremely important, particularly if the victim of crime is vulnerable and has a learning difficulty. It could mean the difference between the person seeking justice or not. With appropriate support it may be possible to see an increase in crimes being reported, reaching court and ultimately resulting in a conviction.

2.7.5 Perceived Good Practice

The Home Office (2004:48) described an initiative in Leicestershire where police officers were each allocated their own section of Leicestershire and they were responsible for overseeing that part of the area as a 'guardian'. The size of the area was dependent on the nature of local issues within that area. Despite it not being practical for the officers to be present at all times

> *"The 'micro-beat' is a constant default which they must return to and oversee. Promotion, movement into specialist departments and bonuses are increasingly dependent on an officer's impact on improving the quality of life in their area"*
>
> (Home Office 2004:48).

The Home Office (2004) continue to discuss good practice that the police service demonstrate with regards to dealing with vulnerable adults, stating that it is vitally important that all members of the community trust and have confidence in the police. It is acknowledged that some people have a different level of support need, for example, adults with mental health problems, or learning difficulties may be particularly vulnerable. A better understanding of how to deal with and respond to adults with learning difficulties, whether they be victims, witnesses or suspects, which supports the views of others, Voice UK for example and their request that more officers are adequately trained in how to support people

who have learning difficulties. (Gillen, 2009). The Government agree there is a need to see police services actively training staff and raising awareness, acknowledging areas of good practice.

Northumbria Police Service ran a pilot mental health awareness course, which provided officers with important information regarding mental health legislation, anger management, prevention, partnership working and victim care, all valuable information, equipping the officers with better skills for dealing with mental health issues. This is significant as it provides recognition by the government that the police need to raise awareness surrounding the needs of adults with learning difficulties, who may be vulnerable.

The Metropolitan Police Service published a guide for vulnerable adults called 'Stay Safe', which is written in an easy to read format, providing information regarding their personal safety and crime. Avon and Somerset Constabulary have published a booklet 'Hate Crime – how the police can help you' with the aim to help and support victims of hate crime in their area. It clearly tells the reader what a hate crime is, what happens when a hate crime is reported, and contains contact details for groups that can offer further support to a victim. There is further advice available for parents or relatives of the victim.

Gordon Fraser, Deputy Chief Constable from Leicestershire Constabulary, speaking at a Disability Hate Crime Matters Conference (2010) acknowledged that the response from the police, council and social services in this case had not been good, stating that the link that these were hate crimes had not been made. In an attempt to put this case into context it was stated that Leicestershire Police Force receives on average over one hundred calls each day regarding anti-social behaviour (Fraser, 2010). An internal review uncovered four main themes. It was discovered that each report of anti-social behaviour made by Fiona Pilkington had been investigated to a reasonable standard, Fiona had decided not to pursue (Fraser, 2010). Each case was, however, treated in isolation, therefore the link was not made. On

occasions the cases were closed without an officer attending, and it was discovered that officers were not good at identifying vulnerable members of their community (Fraser, 2010). Clearly this is not acceptable and the Deputy Chief Constable apologised on behalf of his force. Every incident of anti-social behaviour reported to that police force is now investigated which facilitates the identification of trends/series of incidents, and the caller reporting the incident can now dictate whether an officer attends, a new triage system is in place, providing a more holistic assessment (Lander 2010). The force states that it now has a more robust and open relationship with partner agencies which allows for better sharing of information, vital for the identification of vulnerable members of the community (Fraser, 2010). They suggest all officers are now given intensive training to enable them to recognise vulnerability and they have made it easier for frontline officers to report if they have identified a vulnerable person, the three Cs (crime, context and community) approach is being used (Lander 2010). They have apparently identified good sources of information regarding the communities they serve, for instance it is suggested that General Practitioners are recognised as being a valuable resource and community groups/disability groups are now routinely engaging with the police. A more structured and effective computer system, the 'Taskmaster System', is now being used. The force has established the first Adult Referral and Coordination Team (Fraser 2010).

Despite these steps to prevent such an incident occurring again, there is always the possibility that similar incidents will happen (Fraser, 2010). There is a need for the police to understand the terms 'disability' and 'vulnerability', ensuring they are treated and considered as separate. Not all disabled people believe they are vulnerable. The challenge of understanding the perpetrators is also something the force is looking at. There is a need to encourage people to report incidents to the police, and a definite need for partners to be more joined up, and openly share information. The force need to identify:

"The near misses and not just the collisions"

(Fraser 2010).

With regard to Wales, a unique scheme called 'Report Hate – Safer Wales' developed by all the police services in Wales aims to make it easier for victims, witnesses or any other person to report incidents of hate crime in confidence. Details of each report would be passed securely to the police with permission from the person reporting it. The main issue that this scheme hopes to tackle is the problem of under-reporting. The reasons why people may not report a hate crime could be a belief that the incident is too minor to involve the police, concerns regarding confidentiality, and concerns as to how the police will view them (Safer Wales 2010). This scheme is a step towards addressing this issue of under-reporting, however, it is important that a sufficient level of engagement exists in order for this scheme to be communicated effectively.

In an attempt to tackle the problem of hate crime in Scotland, the Central Scotland Police is working in partnership as part of a three year strategy. This Multi-Agency Hate Response Strategy (MAHRS) sees the health services, local authorities, emergency services, prosecutors, victim's representatives, educational establishments and equality councils all working together to stop hate crime and provide support to victims by promoting understanding of this issue, increase the recording of these hate crimes, identify trends and put into place action plans to deal with issues and provide high levels of care for victims. The number of hate crimes that are reported in Scotland has increased in recent years, this is thought to be due to an increase in confidence in the police (Ilston 2009).

Officers in South Tyneside police in partnership with NEXUS, MENCAP and South Tyneside Learning Disabilities Community Group have produced a DVD 'Talk 2 Us, Your Voice Counts' in an effort to combat disability hate crime. The aim was to highlight the issue

of disability hate crime, ensure a better understanding of the crime and hopefully give victims of this crime the courage to come forward and report hate crime (Hussain 2010).

Whilst it is encouraging to see police services across the country taking positive, proactive steps to raise awareness in relation to the issue that is hate crime and the importance of recognising such crimes, enabling reporting and the provision of adequate support to victims, such activities must be more than lip-service or a tick-box exercise. They must make a real difference to the potentially vulnerable people within their communities for them to be worth anything.

2.8 The Research Area

This research study focused on the South Wales area, specifically the geographical areas covered by South Wales Police, illustrated in figure 6 (South Wales Police, 2013).

Figure 6: Map of Research Area
(South Wales Police, 2013).

The map displays the four policing jurisdictions within South Wales Police, Western, Northern, Central and Eastern. For the purpose of participant confidentiality, areas have been referred to as Area One, Area Two, Area Three and Area Four. To facilitate confidentiality, only the researcher will know the area in which respondents reside. When consideration was given to the participants of the research, it was decided that in order to make comparisons between the divisions, data should be gathered from each division. This would enable the

researcher to discover if there were any differences in the engagement process across the police service area and potentially highlight good practice that could be disseminated service wide by police practitioners.

South Wales Police service an area covering an area of 812 square miles, representing 10% of the geographical area of Wales and consisting of urban, rural and coastal areas (South Wales Police and Crime Commissioner, 2013). The population of the South Wales Police service area is reported to be 1,225,900, which represents 42% of the country's whole population. There are 229 defined neighbourhoods within the South Wales area (South Wales Police, 2013).

2.8.1 Policing Resources

In March 2012 there were 2893 police officers, 1931 support staff, 306 of which were Police Community Support Officers (South Wales Police Authority, 2013).

HMIC (2013:7) in Table 4 suggests the following changes to police officer, police support staff, PCSO and Special Constable numbers due to the financial challenges that the service is facing.

Table 4 Police Resources between 2010 and 2015.

	31.3.10 (Baseline)	**31.3.15**	**Difference**	**South Wales change %**	**England and Wales change %**
Police Officers	3148	2845	-303	-10%	-11%
Police Staff	1810	1565	-245	-14%	-16%
PCSOs	335	506	+171	+51%	-17%
Total	**5293**	**4916**	**-377**	**-7%**	**-13%**
Specials	248	210	-38	-15%	+60%

(HMIC, 2013).

The HMIC (2013) provide guidance to South Wales Police that suggests they will lose a smaller proportion of police officers than other services. The number of police support staff will also decrease by less than the average, meanwhile the numbers of PCSO's will increase considerably in South Wales, a contrast to other police services across England and Wales.

Overall, the table illustrates that South Wales Police workforce reductions are almost half the average for England and Wales (HMIC, 2013).

According to the HMIC (2013), the public value and are reassured seeing police officers patrolling the streets. In March 2013, South Wales Police allocated 58% of its police officers to more visible, front line roles in response to this. This visible presence further enhanced to a figure of 63% by PCSO's who primarily support community policing.

2.8.2 Crime

South Wales Police deal with approximately 430,000 incidents each year, over 87,000 of which are crime related, along with receiving 200,000 emergency calls. There are over 38,000 arrests made each year (South Wales Police and Crime Commissioner, 2013).

The HMIC (2013:13) report the following crime rates for the 12 months leading to March 2013. Table 5 outlines the figures.

Table 5 Crime figures in South Wales 2012/2013.

12 months to March 2013	Rate per 1,000 population in South Wales	England and Wales per 1,000 rate
Crimes (excluding fraud)	64.4	61.4
Victim – based crime	56.2	54.5
Burglary	7.6	8.2
Violence against the person	10.6	10.6
Anti-social behaviour incidents	34.6	40.7

(HMIC, 2013:13).

Table 6 overleaf shows the percentage of adults who reported a crime, compared to adults who are disabled. Williams (2012) reports that the British Crime Survey 2009/10 provides the following statistics:

Table 6: Number of crimes reported by disabled people compared to non-disabled people during 2009/2010.

BCS 2009/2010		
	Disabled	**Not Disabled**
16-34	38%	30%
35-54	29%	22%
55-64	20%	15%
65+	10%	9%

(Williams, 2012).

Mencap (1999) in their 'Living in Fear' survey reported that out of 904 respondents, 88% claimed they had been bullied during the previous year with 32% of these saying bullying took place daily or weekly. More recent reports suggest that hate crime is a daily occurrence for people in Wales, and that hate crimes are motivated by a number of factors, including drugs, alcohol, and negative and stereotyped images of minorities by the media and a general hostility towards certain groups (BBC News, 2013).

With some perspective of the area in which the research took place, the researcher explored methods in which to gather the data, with the aim of reaching as many participants as possible.

2.9 Conclusion

To conclude, the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 introduced the statutory obligation for the police and partner agencies to engage in consultation with communities in order to set policing priorities. Effective community engagement is vital, and despite difficulties defining this process, it is important a workable definition is agreed upon. Community engagement can mean different things to different people because of different circumstances but in order to enable community members to participate in policing (whatever their chosen level of participation) the police must understand the process of engagement.

There is no 'one size fits all' approach to community policing, therefore the police need to gain a thorough understanding of the demographics of the community it serves. It is this

understanding of the community that should inform the police regarding potentially vulnerable members of the community who are in danger of being marginalised, such as adults with learning difficulties.

Adults with learning difficulties can be easy targets for crime. Hate crime and disability hate crimes are described as such because the perpetrator's prejudice towards a person or group of people is a significant factor in who is victimised. The under-reporting of hate crimes to the police is recognised as an issue, which again highlights the importance of the police and partners engaging with this section of the community.

This research project will aim to reveal some insights into the current engagement process between the police and adults with learning difficulties in South Wales. It will explore the issues that this section of the community faces, and ways in which the engagement process can be improved.

Chapter Three

Methodology and Methods

3.1 Introduction

"*Researching social life is partly about having the right knowledge: for instance, how to design samples, when to take field notes and how to analyse data: and partly about practical skills: how to lay out questionnaires, how to get access to historical archives and how to get the co-operation of an interviewee"*

(Gilbert, 2008:81)

Gilbert highlights an important point that good research should contain a mixture of several research methodologies if one is to better understand the subject. Unfortunately this approach does not appear to have been employed to any great extent when examining police interaction with disadvantaged groups. Therefore, the purpose of this research study is to analyse the social interaction process between the police and adults with learning difficulties in South Wales. It set out to obtain the perceptions, views and feelings of this part of the wider community with a view to informing the academic arena and provide understanding for police practitioners in order to improve their communication process when dealing with marginalised groups.

This chapter will discuss vital considerations when undertaking such research. Firstly, a variety of ethical considerations given the sensitive nature of the research. Secondly, gaining access to participants and the use of gatekeepers to facilitate the research. Finally, issues such as confidentiality and anonymity were deliberated. This chapter will also discuss qualitative and quantitative methods in order to gain an understanding of these approaches, their suitability or unsuitability for this project, providing justification for the chosen method for this particular study. Additionally, methods of data generation will be explored and justified.

3.2 The Aim of the Research

As discussed, this research is concerned with the interaction between the police and disadvantaged groups, focussing specifically on adults within South Wales who have learning difficulties, with a view to gaining:

- A particular interest in their experiences of incidents of crime, hate crime, disability hate crime,
- Their relationship or engagement (if any) with the police, and an understanding of whether they would feel able and comfortable to report incidents to the police.

This is a two stage study that will engage professionals who support adults with learning difficulties during the first stage of focus groups. During the second stage of the focus groups adults with learning difficulties from across South Wales will be invited to take part. It is hoped that a greater appreciation of the current engagement process between the police and this potentially marginalised and vulnerable section of the community, from the viewpoint of adults with learning difficulties themselves, will be gained, as very little is written and understood about this subject. This study will, at the very least, inform and contribute knowledge to the academic arena and will provide recommendations to practitioners on ways in which the engagement process could be reconsidered and ultimately improved.

A significant review of the literature was undertaken which suggested three important issues; firstly, adults with learning difficulties are more likely to experience high levels of crime and disability hate crime regularly. Secondly, it identified that these crimes/incidents often go unreported as these adults tend to alter the way they live their lives to adapt to these incidents rather than seeking the help of the police, and finally, of the cases that are reported to the police, few make it to court, and even fewer result in a conviction. It is suggested that with

greater social inclusion the reporting of crimes to the police may increase, which could see more cases resulting in a conviction.

3.3 Research Methodology

Consideration was given to the meaning of terms such as 'research methodology' and 'research methods' in order to ensure the most appropriate choices were made. Research methodology can be described as discussion regarding the assumptions that support different approaches to carrying out a research study and developing theory (Barbour, 2008). Research methods are defined as the tools that a researcher employs to access and generate data (Barbour, 2008), tools that can be picked up as and when they are needed to assist in the fulfilment of particular needs and purposes during the study (Clough and Nutbrown, 2007; Barbour, 2008; Bryman, 2011). In more simple terms methods are explained as the ingredients of research, whilst methodology would be the reason for using a certain recipe (Clough and Nutbrown, 2007).

This section explores in detail the potential research methodologies, methods and their suitability for this particular study, justifying the decisions made. Whilst it is possible to carry out a worthwhile study without detailed understanding of the various approaches to research, some knowledge will inform decisions and provide valuable insight into the planning process of a research project, thus providing the researcher with an enhanced understanding of the literature they will inevitably need to read (Bell, 2005). The discovery of the most appropriate research methodology and research method is an extremely important part of the research process (Bowling, 2009). For this very reason considerable deliberation was given to the methodological approach that should be adopted in this study.

For the purpose of this study, two main methodological approaches will be discussed, quantitative and qualitative. Both approaches have their distinctive identities, and have been the cause of much discussion in the arena of social science research.

3.3.1 The Qualitative versus Quantitative Debate

For years researchers have deliberated and debated the topic of research methodology, and the theory of how research studies should ensue (Dantzker and Hunter, 2012).

Much of these complex discussions and arguments have surrounded qualitative and quantitative methods, with researchers questioning which methodology is more scientific and valid. There is a danger that researchers can fall into a trap believing that quantitative research is superior to qualitative research or vice versa (Dawson, 2002). However, Dawson suggests that neither methodology is superior, both have their strengths and weaknesses and that researchers should ensure they are aware of these. This notion that qualitative and quantitative research methodologies are separate and inferior/superior has been challenged frequently (Pope and Mays, 1995).

There appears traditionally to be a division between both research approaches and it has often been the case that a researcher can feel pushed into a particular approach (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Mason, 1996). The different approaches can be linked to the differing views on how the social world is perceived. Over time, social research methods have developed, for example, quantitative methods have grown from methods used in physical science. These are predicted with the view that the world has physical reality that social researchers can measure all the phenomena that occur and that results of experiments will be the same if the research/experiment were repeated in the future. This approach to research would not be appropriate for this study, as thoughts, feelings and experiences of the participants who take part in the research can/will change over time. New experiences with

the police will perhaps change perceptions. It would not be possible to repeat the study in the future with a view to expecting the same results/findings.

It is recognised that there is no absolute/definitive divide between the use of quantitative and qualitative methods, both approaches will be examined in order to inform discussion on the chosen methodology for this thesis.

3.3.2 Quantitative Research

Quantitative research methodology is usually associated with a positivist approach, Bryman (2011:697) defines positivism as:

> *"An epistemological position that advocates the application of the methods of the natural sciences to the study of social reality and beyond"*
>
> (Bryman, 2011:697)

The positivist approach is mainly concerned with the use of data that is structured, and can be reported/recorded/represented numerically. Typically, the data generated can be statistically analysed, aiming to test the connections between defined variables with a view to establishing outcomes that can be generalised to larger populations (Matthews and Ross, 2010; Bowling, 2009; Lincoln and Guber, 1985). Hammersley (1992) agrees that quantitative methodologies rely on numbers, artificial settings and positivism. With regards to the collection of such data, it is suggested that surveys, experiments and structured observations are appropriate methods adopted by the quantitative researcher (Bryman, 2011; Matthews and Ross, 2010). Quantitative research studies are deductive in nature, whereby a researcher deduces a hypothesis on the basis of what they already know about a subject, and then undertakes the research, with the hypothesis driving the process of data gathering. The data gathered tests the hypothesis that was deduced at the start of the research process, confirming or rejecting it (Bryman, 2011).

Quantitative research, therefore is extremely effective at identifying significant relationships between variables, whereas qualitative research can expose the mechanisms that link those variables by exploring the accounts and explanations provided by those involved in the research (Barbour, 2008).

3.3.3 Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is concerned with the accounts, stories, feelings, beliefs and concerns of the participants and can answer different questions to quantitative research; it can provide a richer, fuller picture and a valuable and unique insight into a phenomena which can inform the researcher, affording them a fuller, rounded understanding of the subject area in question (Barbour, 2008; Cresswell, 1994). Qualitative research methodology is primarily associated with research strategies such as ethnography, phenomenology and grounded theory (Denscombe, 2010). These research strategies will be explored later in this chapter. Qualitative research lends itself to a naturalist paradigm (Lincoln and Guber, 1985). Bryman (2011:367) defines naturalism as

> *"Seeking to understand social reality in its own terms; 'as it really is' – providing rich descriptions of people and interaction in natural settings"*
>
> (Bryman, 2011:367)

Qualitative research is inductive in nature, allowing the researcher the opportunity to build theories from the data gathered as opposed to beginning with a hypothesis to test, which is characteristic of quantitative research methods. Typically the data is gathered in the form of words or expressions (Matthews and Ross, 2010; Hammersley, 1992; Bryman, 2011; Bowling, 2009), and the generation of such data relies on unstructured interviews, semi-structured interviews, focus groups, questionnaires and discourse analysis (Bryman, 2011). The flexible nature of qualitative research has meant that it can be perceived by researchers

as being more casual than other methodologies; However, Denzin and Lincoln (2005) suggest this is not the case.

Barbour (2008) further explains that the two approaches can be very complimentary when the common interest is to understand a particular situation or phenomenon, therefore a mixed method approach may be of great interest to researchers. Quantitative research methods are effective in identifying relationships between the variables in question, whilst qualitative research methods compliment this by exposing the mechanisms that link the variables.

Table 7 shows a summary of the differences between quantitative and qualitative research methodologies is provided by Lincoln and Guber (1985:37).

Table 7: Differences between quantitative and qualitative research methodologies.

Axioms About	**Positivist Paradigm**	**Naturalist Paradigm**
The nature of reality.	Reality is single, tangible and fragmentable.	Realities are multiple, constructed and holistic.
The relationship of knower to be known.	Knower and known are independent, a dualism.	Knower and known are interactive, inseparable.
The possibility of generalisation.	Time and context free. Generalisations are possible.	Only time and context-bound working hypotheses are possible.
The possibility of causal linkages.	There are real causes temporarily precedent to or simultaneous with their effects.	All entities are in a state of simultaneous shaping, so that it is impossible to distinguish causes from effects.
The role of values.	Inquiry is value free.	Inquiry is value bound.

(Lincoln and Guber, 1985:37).

Glesne and Peshkin (1992) in table 8 overleaf provide a more detailed examination of the two schools of thought, something that was useful for the identification of the most appropriate method for this thesis.

Table 8: Quantitative and Qualitative Methodologies.

	Quantitative Mode	Qualitative Mode
Assumptions	Social facts have an objective reality Primacy of method Variables can be measured Etic	Reality is socially constructed Primacy of subject matter Variables are complex, interwoven and difficult to measure Emic
Purpose	Generalisability Prediction Causal explanations	Contextualisation Interpretation Understanding perspectives
Approach	Begins with hypotheses and theories Manipulation and control Deductive Abstract language in write up Uses formal instruments Experimentation Reduced data to numerical indices Component analysis	Ends with hypotheses and grounded theories Emergence and portrayal Inductive Descriptive write up Researcher as instrument Naturalistic Makes minor use of numerical indices Seeks patterns

(Glesne and Peshkin, 1992).

With consideration to this summary provided by Lincoln and Guber (1985), it has been identified that the aims of this research are best served by the naturalist paradigm because the researcher and the 'object' of inquiry influence each other through interaction, they are inseparable, as opposed to the positivist version of inquiry which suggests that the inquirer and object of inquiry are independent. The naturalist paradigm suggests it is not possible to make generalisations from the results of the inquiry, whereas the positivist paradigm suggests that generalisations or truth statements free from time and context can be drawn (Lincoln and Guber, 1985).

The study aims to explore the issues identified in the literature review which infer that adults with learning difficulties are more likely to experience hate crime, less likely to report these crimes, and of those reported few will reach court, and fewer still resulting in conviction. In order to investigate these issues the researcher believed it would be necessary to engage adults with learning difficulties themselves, despite the sensitive nature of the proposed subject matter and prospective participants. Explanations of how adults with learning difficulties perceive a particular phenomenon was needed, therefore it was essential, despite

the sensitivity, to engage and invite adults with learning difficulties to take part. Hesse-Biber et al (2004, cited in Liamputtong, 2007:1) agree suggesting that:

> *"Starting research from the standpoint of the oppressed is valid because it is often the lives and experiences of oppressed people that provide significant insight and perspective"*
> (Hesse-Biber et al 2004, cited in Liamputtong 2007:1).

The researcher in this study acknowledges that it is not possible to make generalisations that can be applied to the entire population of adults with learning difficulties that can be reproduced any time or anywhere. This research will gain the opinions and feelings of a small group of people, these opinions and feelings will of course differ across the population. With regard to the summary provided by Glesne and Peshkin (1992), it was again felt that the use of a qualitative mode of research is more suitable in this study. Again, an understanding of perspectives is sought not generalizability. Unlike in Glesne and Peshkin's description of a quantitative mode of research beginning with hypotheses, there is little known about this subject area, therefore the it lends itself more to the qualitative mode described, where theories may emerge throughout the process, or at the very least a descriptive write up which will portray the participants experiences.

A qualitative study of this nature that aims to involve participants with learning difficulties naturally brings with it a multitude of ethical considerations.

3.4 Exploration of qualitative research approaches

It is extremely important to consider the research methods carefully to ensure the most appropriate approach which is likely to generate the best data to ultimately inform and meet the aim of the research study (Parahoo, 1997; Bowling, 2009).

Careful consideration was given to the analysis provided by Glesne and Peshkin (1992), and Lincoln and Guber (1985). As a result, it was decided that the aims of this research study were best suited to the 'naturalist' paradigm and the qualitative approaches because the

research does not aim to make generalisations from the data gathered. Instead it is hoped that this research will gain an understanding and interpret the perspectives/understandings/beliefs of the individuals involved in this phenomenon. This research study is inductive in nature, meaning it is hoping that theories will be generated from the research, as opposed to deductive research, where research is carried out with reference to hypotheses/theories that already exist. Despite the researcher having an idea about what it will explore, the research study began without a working hypotheses. It aimed to develop a greater understanding of the feelings and experiences of a small group of people. It acknowledges that the generation of theories is not a practical consideration due to the sample size, however, through the rich, contextual data generated it is hopeful that further questions for further and future study will emerge as the data is analysed.

It is suggested again therefore, that a quantitative approach was not appropriate. It is suggested that natural science and the objects of their study, such as atoms, molecules and gases, cannot ascribe meanings to events and their environment. It is social science that is able to attribute this meaning (Schutz, 1970).

Once it was decided that a qualitative approach was most appropriate, a critical review of the stages of the study was carried out in order to decide upon the most suitable approach within this qualitative paradigm. An approach that would allow adults with learning difficulties to discuss their experiences of crime/incidents where they had any, their engagement with the police at present, and their views regarding reporting crime to the police if necessary in the future.

The approaches given consideration for this research study were:

- Ethnography
- Grounded theory
- Phenomenology

3.4.1 Ethnography

Ethnographers immerse themselves in a community, or in a group with an aim to gain some understanding of culture through the observation of complete cycles of events in their natural settings or 'fields' as that society or culture interact with the environment around them (Lutz, 1986; Brewer, 2000; Dawson, 2002), examining learned patterns of behaviour, language and interactions, and ways of life (Bowling, 2009; Bryman, 2011) with an emphasis on describing and interpreting cultural behaviour (Dawson, 2002).

There are a number of techniques and methods available to an ethnographic researcher, such as interviews, participant observation, taking part in group activities, interaction analysis, mapping and charting, the study of public documents and historical records, taking notes, and the use of demographic data, analysing, reflecting, writing reports (Lutz, 1986; Dawson, 2002).

The particular culture's emic perspective, how they view the world is sought during an ethnographic study (Chambers, 1997).

Ethnography is extremely time consuming, as the researcher has to be accepted into the community at the heart of the study, which can mean living within that community for lengthy periods (Bell, 2005) therefore it was not considered an appropriate choice of approach for this particular study.

3.4.2 Grounded Theory

The grounded theory approach to qualitative research was developed by Glaser and Strauss (1965) during the 1960s whilst undertaking an observational research study of dying patients and how they were being treated by hospitals (Bell, 2005; Dawson, 2002).

Grounded theory is not concerned with any particular commitment to specific theoretical interests, lines of research or kinds of data. Instead, its main focus is on the generation and discovery of theory in relation to a particular circumstance, situation or phenomenon. The emphasis is on the generation of theory which is grounded in (emerging from) the data (Dawson, 2002; Bell, 2005). Punch (1998) agrees that the best way to define grounded theory is a research approach that generates theory inductively from data.

There is an iterative process to grounded theory, a cyclical method in which theoretical insights are generated by the data gathered. Those insights are then tested in order to see how sense can be made of other parts of the data, which results in further theoretical insight, which can also be tested. This process continues in a cycle (Hayes, 2000).

Grounded theory researchers will begin their research without a hypothesis to test, but they will have questions. Often a literature review is not carried out at the beginning of the research process but can be carried out alongside the process of gathering and analysing the data, this will depend on the type of study. The process of data analysis begins as the data is generated, a process that continues in a cycle as discussed, until theoretical saturation is reached. It is at this stage where new theoretical elements are no longer found, rather a confirmation of what is already known (Punch, 1998; Dawson, 2002). Carrying out the literature review in conjunction with the data collection and analysis allows the researcher to explain findings as they emerge (Dawson, 2002).

Grounded theory is a relatively flexible approach to research in the sense that a researcher may not know how many people will participate at the beginning of the process and they will be unsure where the research will lead (Dawson, 2002).

This research study is not seeking to use an iterative approach to generate hypotheses or theories. It seeks to discover the perceptions of people who have mild learning difficulties

with regards to the police and crime in order to make sense of what effective engagement with the police means to them. Therefore grounded theory was not considered to be an appropriate research approach for this particular study.

3.4.3 Phenomenology

Phenomenology is a philosophical attitude and research approach (Flood, 2010) which according to Denscombe (2010) encompasses styles of research that do not rely upon statistics, measurement, or scientific method as it is concerned, first and foremost, with lived experiences of individuals, how they make sense of the world around them, their perceptions and experiences of a particular phenomenon (Bryman, 2011; Denscombe, 2010). Quite simply Lewis and Staehler (2010:1) define phenomenology as

> *"Phenomenology is a science of phenomenon"*
> (Lewis and Staehler, 2010:1)

A phenomenon is described as something that is seen, heard, smelled, tasted, touched, experienced directly, and though we experience it, is not understood through conceptualisation or analysis (Denscombe, 2010).

The researcher wished to focus the research on human experiences that have not yet been subjected to analysis or theorising, therefore a phenomenological approach to the study was deemed appropriate as little research has been undertaken into the experiences of adults with learning difficulties with regard to crimes and engaging the police. Flood (2010) suggests that the epistemology of phenomenology is centred on uncovering meaning rather than developing abstract theory or arguing a point. The literature review demonstrated that little was known about the experiences of adults with learning difficulties, from their own perspective and it is argued that engagement with police is a central part of life for adults with learning difficulties given that we reside in a democratic society. The aim of the

research was to gain greater understanding about the lived experiences of this section of our community, seeking their recommendations and how they would like to see the engagement process.

Building on Shutz's (1970) view where it is suggested that natural sciences cannot attribute meanings to events and environments, whilst social sciences can, it is suggested that many qualitative researchers believe a method of research that reflects the differences between people and objects of the natural sciences is needed (Bryman, 2011).

It is believed that people make sense of their lives through their own experiences, and it is these experiences that shape a person's behaviour. Therefore if a researcher can gain an understanding of a participant's thinking it will allow interpretation of the social world and phenomena in question from their specific point of view (Shutz, 1970; Silverman, 2005).

Two schools of phenomenology, Husserlian and Heideggerian were explored in order to discover which philosophical tradition would better inform the methods for this particular study.

The philosophical ideas of Husserl (1970) resulted in the emergence of a descriptive approach to inquiry. A descriptive phenomenological study provides the reader with a snap-shot of a phenomenon which is purely descriptive (Hedrick et al, 1993; Gray 2009). A researcher who wishes to undertake a descriptive study, exploring the experiences of individuals, should shed all previous knowledge, although it could be argued that achieving such purity is naïve, as the researcher must have some knowledge in order to know what questions to ask and shape the research. With this in mind, as far as practicable a researcher should aim to prevent all preconceptions and biases from influencing the study by bracketing what is already known.

The process of 'bracketing' should ensure scientific rigour and the emergence of unadulterated meanings (Husserl, 1970; Drew, 1999; LeVasseur, 2003; Gray, 2009). Schutz

(1962) further suggests that a researcher should as much as possible assume the stance of a stranger as such naivety will enable the researcher to explore the subject more thoroughly. Heidegger (1962) and his interpretive style of phenomenology seeks to discover how individuals come to experience phenomena the way they do. This exploration of the lived experience, and understanding of the meaning of the experience (Osborne, 1994) is in opposition to the Husserlian style of phenomenology which is focused on people or phenomena (Thompson, 1990). It has been suggested that the Heideggerian approach to phenomenology disagrees with Husserl with regard to the researcher bracketing their views and understanding of a phenomena, arguing that prior knowledge is necessary and useful (Koch, 1995; Geanellos, 2000; Heidegger, 1962; Flood, 2010). It has been suggested that during interpretive phenomenology a 'fusion of horizons', a blend of participant and researcher views occurs (Gadamer, 1976).

With consideration to the Husserlian and Heideggerian approaches to phenomenology the researcher felt the Husserlian approach was appropriate and fitting given its focus on the lived experience of individuals as opposed to the Heideggarian approach which would focus more on how individuals come to experience the phenomena the way they do.

With the Husserlian approach in mind, the researcher considered bracketing as naturally there were opinions, beliefs and expectations as to what the experiences of adults with learning difficulties with regard to crime and engagement with the police present, particularly following an extensive literature review. However it was felt that with careful acknowledgement of such preconceptions, bracketing and careful preparation of questions for use during the focus groups the researcher was able to remain impartial, and not inadvertently lead the participants, playing the role of 'stranger' as suggested by Schutz (1962). To facilitate the bracketing process the researcher recorded any personal views, understanding of the phenomena in a reflective journal prior to commencing the data collection. The

reflections included personal opinion, past experiences and discussions with adults who have learning difficulties. The researcher felt it was important to encapsulate how these preconceptions could influence the study. An account of the researcher reflective journal, which was recorded prior to the commencement of the focus groups can be found in Appendix D.

Denscombe (2010) discusses some advantages and disadvantages of phenomenology that were given consideration during the process of this research. The first of the advantages discussed is its suitability to small scale research studies as it generally relies upon in-depth interviews. Secondly its description of interesting experiences is suggested an advantage, as this is likely to attract a wide audience who are interested with everyday life. Thirdly the prospect of an authentic account of a complex phenomenon is thought to be an advantage. A phenomenological approach allows a researcher to deal with the complexities of a social world which is rarely straightforward. Fourthly, the view that phenomenology is a humanistic style of research, with a respect for people inherent in the approach is thought to be an advantage (Denscombe, 2010).

The first disadvantage of a phenomenological approach discussed by Denscombe include the emphasis on subjectivity, description and interpretation in the research process as opposed to scientific objectivity, analysis and measurement and a general lack of 'scientific rigour'. Secondly Denscombe described its association with description and no analysis that depends on type of phenomenology as a disadvantage, as a phenomenologist will, according to some, provide nothing but descriptions. The third disadvantage discussed is regarding the possibility of making generalisations. Questions are raised regarding the relativeness of the data as a study will not usually involve large numbers of participants (Denscombe, 2010).

The analysis of ethnography, grounded theory and phenomenology has enabled an informed decision regarding the most appropriate research methodology for this study. This is

considered to be a qualitative methodology informed by Husserl's philosophical ideas of a descriptive phenomenological approach to inquiry, as a descriptive account of individuals' experiences was sought regarding this is relatively under-researched topic which was to include a small amount of participants. The desire was to inform the academic arena with an understanding of the views of adults with mild learning difficulties with regards to police engagement, crime, and hate crime. It did not aim to make generalisations, however it is hoped that the result of this study will be the provision of a greater and richer understanding of the issues faced by this marginalised section of our community.

3.5 Rationale for Data Collection Tools

As previously discussed, the purpose of this research was to gain rich, contextual data surrounding this particular phenomenon and to this end, a qualitative research method was adopted.

It was desirable to reach as many adults with learning difficulties across South Wales as possible in order to gain a range of differing views and perspectives within the time frame afforded for this research.

To inform the decision regarding the most appropriate method of gathering data, the following approaches were given consideration:

- Interviews
- Focus Groups

3.5.1 Interviews

Interviews are an effective method of gathering data based upon the respondent's opinions, emotions, feelings, perceptions and experiences of given situations which require exploration in detail. They can be used when researching topics of a sensitive nature and careful consideration needs to be given if this is the case (Denscombe, 2010). Interviews are one of the most popular methods of gathering data in qualitative research and are generally far less

structured than interviews more commonly associated with survey research (Bryman, 2011). An important consideration, according to Denscombe (2010) is whether the use of one-to-one interviews is viable in terms of cost and travel time, and whether he/she can gain access to sufficient numbers of participants.

The use of interviews during the data generation phase of the research process can be attractive to researchers as they can be viewed as not requiring a great deal of technical knowhow, instead drawing on skills that the researcher may already possess, for example the ability to hold a conversation. This is not true in reality; interviews are far more than holding a simple conversation. The researcher needs to possess a set of assumptions and a certain amount of understanding about a situation; this is not normally the case with a casual conversation (Silverman, 1985). There are a variety of types of interview that a qualitative researcher can utilise (Denscombe, 2010)

- Structured Interview
- One to One/Unstructured Interview
- Semi-structured Interview
- Group Interview
- Focus Group

Dawson (2002) adds another type of interview to the list, that of a semi-structured nature.

3.5.1.1 Structured Interview

A structured interview is in essence a questionnaire that very much suited to quantitative research methods. It could be carried out face-to-face with the respondent, or perhaps over the telephone. It consists of a pre-determined, tightly controlled and highly structured list of questions with limited option responses (Denscombe, 2010; Dawson, 2002). The responses should be fairly concise and easy to record, summarise and analyse (Bell, 2005).

Gathering data by using structured interviews is not appropriate for this research project as there leaves little room for further exploration of points made by respondents, the data gathered would be restricted to the topics that the interviewer feels are relevant/important (Bryman, 2011).

3.5.1.2 Unstructured Interview

An unstructured interviews is sometimes referred to as a 'life history' interview, during which a researcher is able to obtain a holistic understanding of the participant's views and opinions as they are able to talk freely about what is important to them (Dawson, 2002; Bryman, 2011). An unstructured interview is a useful tool often used by a researcher at the preliminary interview stage of a research study, at a time when the researcher is seeking to gain an understanding of the topic. An unstructured interview comprises of one respondent and one researcher. This method which produces a wealth of valuable data is only suitable for qualitative research methods (Bell, 2005). This method of data collection is attractive as it presents the researcher with a number of benefits, including being quite easy to arrange, as it only has to consider the diaries of two people; being relatively easy to control as there is only one respondent's thoughts, opinions and views to grasp; being easily managed as there is only one person that the researcher has to guide through the interview process; and it is much easier for the researcher to transcribe (Denscombe, 2010).

However, despite one-to-one interviews offering the researcher greater control, it was felt that they would be too time consuming for this research study. Time constraints would introduce limitations on how many respondents could be reached during the study. The researcher would also lose the opportunity to observe similarities and differences of opinion between participants during the data gathering stage, meaning these conclusions would need to be

drawn at a later stage during the data analysis phase (Litosseliti, 2003; Denscombe, 2010). Denscombe (2010) suggests that group interviews are a practical solution to these problems. Group interviews may be perceived as an easy way to gather data, as the interviewer doesn't ask many questions. This is not the case, as the researcher needs to work hard at establishing a rapport with the participant and a certain degree of trust is necessary if a participant is going to feel comfortable enough to discuss personal and sometimes sensitive topics. The researcher needs to ensure they act with diplomacy, tact, and should remain alert in order to recognise when they should intervene and probe for more detail. Researchers must be mindful that unstructured interviews will produce a great volume of rich data that can be difficult to analyse (Dawson, 2002).

3.5.1.3 Semi-structured Interview

This approach is possibly the most common type of interview used in qualitative research (Dawson, 2002). The researcher is keen for the interview to be fairly flexible whilst seeking specific information regarding the topic being researched. This information can be compared and contrasted with the responses of other participants during the data analysis phase. It is recommended that the researcher prepares a schedule of questions or topics that they would like participants to discuss, this same schedule should be taken into each and every interview to ensure the same subjects are approached. If the researcher is to use a grounded theory approach to the research, the schedule of questions may be updated following each interview to include new topics as they arise during the previous interviews (Dawson, 2002).

3.5.1.4 Group Interview

Group interviews are conducted in a similar fashion as one-to-one, unstructured interviews, the difference being that they increase the number of respondents reached by the researcher

thus providing the researcher with a broader spectrum of opinions and views (Bell, 2005; Denscombe, 2010). Usually the researcher remains the focal point of the interview, ensuring they interact with respondents as individuals, not as a group.

3.5.2 Focus Groups

A focus group, according to Matthews and Ross (2010) is a type of group interview. Typically a focus group will consist of between 5-13 participants invited to take part in a discussion that can last an hour or two. The participants would for this type of method be selected as they share something in common, ordinarily connected to the topic being researched. The data generated during a group discussion is gathered by a researcher, although the researcher can do more than gather data from the discussion for example they can gather data from the participants associated with the focus group, analyse how the group interacts, or how individuals respond and react to each other or situations as a group allowing the researcher to build an overall picture of perceptions (Litosseliti, 2003).

Focus groups have been used as a method of data collection for much of the latter half of the twentieth century by researchers (Matthews and Ross, 2010), becoming a popular tool in the 1960s for market researchers (Bloor et al, 2001), and more widely used by the public sector during the 1980s to determine political opinions and assess the impact of services (Matthews and Ross, 2010; Barbour, 2008). In more recent years they have become more popular in the world of social science as a tool to assess public opinion and develop policies (Matthews and Ross, 2010).

It is argued by some researchers that a focus group is a better forum than other data collection methods for discussing sensitive topics, particularly if participants would feel more comfortable in a group setting as opposed to a one-to-one interview (Farquhar and Das, 1999), other commentators agree, suggesting there is a possibility that issues may come to the

fore during a focus group environment which may not be elicited in other ways (Stuart and Shamdasani, 1990; Kitzinger, 1994). This is possible if the group is not controlled too tightly by the researcher enabling participant's freedom to discuss what is important to them. Bryman (2011) suggests that a researcher should encourage participants to somewhat ramble and go off at a tangent if appropriate, as this can provide rich data to the study.

The issues that the researcher feels are important can be explored, and through this discussion it is hoped that participants will feel able and comfortable to talk about issues that are important to them (Fraser and Fraser, 2001). This degree of spontaneity is important as the researcher wants the participants to express their views freely, without pressure to respond if they chose not to (Butler, 1996; Vaughn et al, 1996). Matthews and Ross (2010) discuss ways in which focus groups can be used, these are outlined in Table 9.

Table 9: Ways in which Focus Groups can be used.

Exploratory	A focus group can be used at the pre-pilot stage where the researcher can form some understanding of the issues that are important to respondents, along with the language or concepts that are used in the discussion. Information gathered at this stage can be used to assist the researcher design further data collection tools, such as questionnaires or structured interview. An exploratory focus group is commonly used when little is known or has been written about a subject.
Generating hypothesis or developing a theory	In this instance a focus group can help the researcher to gather data that will assist in the construction of tentative explanations as to the experiences and understanding of phenomenon.

Observing and recording how the group interacts with each other	The researcher in this instance will be interested in the interaction between the participants of the focus group. Interest will be taken in who takes the lead in the discussions, how the group agrees on language, how concepts are defined, how the dialogue develops.
Consultation and evaluation	In this situation participants of the focus group are consulted to discover what they feel about a proposed or existing phenomenon, for example, a proposed new policy or an existing public service. As well as sharing their opinions, ideas, and experiences participants will be asked to consider the advantages and disadvantages of the subject matter.
'Checking back'	Following the data analysis stage of the research process, a researcher may use reference focus groups to report back findings to the participants in order to check that the data has been interpreted correctly. This may be necessary if the researcher feels that data collected previously has produced surprising results that cannot be explained.
Empowering and involving participants	Participants may invited to attend focus groups as a way of involving them in a decision making process, providing them with a sense of ownership in the research process.

	This purpose for focus groups may require the groups to meet on more than one occasion over a period of time.

(Adapted from Matthews and Ross, 2010).

3.5.3 Piloting the Research

Prior to conducting this research study, preliminary research took place. Semi-structured one-to-one interviews were the chosen method of gathering data at this stage.

Groups of between 8-10 participants who have mild learning difficulties were present during a meeting to discuss the research and they could take part if they felt they wanted to.

The researcher believed that participants in the one-to-one interviews seemed to want to please the researcher, a characteristic of the Hawthorne effect. The Hawthorne effect refers to the likelihood that participants in a research project may adjust their behaviour in a positive way simply because they are aware that they are being studied or to meet the expectations of the researcher (Clemente, 2002; Ritzer and Ryan, 2010; Jamison, 2006; Bowling, 2009). Clark and Bowling (1990) suggest that this observer effect can erode over time, suggesting therefore that the researcher may wish to gather data after a period of time when the observer effect has possibly worn off. It is important for a researcher to consider the possibility of the Hawthorne effect, as however well integrated the researcher is within the group there is always potential for reactivity (Bowling, 2009; Jamison, 2006).

Denscombe (2010) discusses the potential for the observer effect, which has similar consequences as the Hawthorne effect, suggesting reasons for a respondent/participant altering their behaviour during the research process. Firstly they could feel embarrassed and self-conscious about being observed. Secondly the respondent may feel threatened by the observation and their behaviour could be defensive. Denscombe suggests that either of these

reactions can jeopardise the validity of the observations as the respondents would be acting unnaturally.

Consideration was given to the experiences of the researcher and participants during the preliminary research phase and respondents who were invited to take part in the pilot stage of the research process were consulted with a view to obtaining their preference with regards to the use of one-to-one interviews or focus groups. All participants expressed a preference to discuss the topics within a group setting, stating that they would feel more comfortable with their peers.

With regards to the potential for reaching more respondents through the use of focus groups, Fern (1982) suggests that a group can produce the same amount of ideas and views in two focus groups consisting of eight respondents as ten individual interviews. Based on this view, carrying out eight focus groups for the purpose of this research would generate data equivalent to interviewing forty individuals.

Focus groups are often the chosen method of data collection when the respondents are viewed as hard-to-reach, including members of our community who are out of touch with services, members of minority ethnic groups, and in the case of this research adults with learning difficulties, as the atmosphere provided is more like their natural environment, and can be less intimidating (Kitzinger and Barbour, 1999; Krueger, 1994). Krueger (1994:19) suggests that:

> *"Participants are influencing and influenced by others just as in real life"*
> (Krueger, 1994:19)

Goodman (1998) suggests a reason behind these poor levels of inclusion with regards to adults with learning difficulties was due to a lack of understanding. Furthermore, Goodman states that adults with learning difficulties can take part with good effect as the introduction of tools such as creative media, role play, drawings, videos and wall posters can assist those who are unable to communicate verbally. Kitzinger (1994) has mixed views regarding the

use of focus groups with adults who have learning difficulties suggesting that they can present certain difficulties as participants may not understand the process, possibly due to their communication difficulties. In contrast, they can provide an environment where other participants who were quieter and have previously been unresponsive may respond well to the group conversation.

It may be agreed that focus groups can save researchers time and money, however consideration needs to be given to the logistics involved as it can be difficult to bring individuals together certain times and places for the research to take place (Barbour, 2008). Krueger (1994) argues against this stating that an advantage of focus groups is that it can be more economical, as the researcher sees groups of respondents, rather than one at a time. For the purpose of this research, members of the 'People First' organisation who meet on a monthly basis were invited to take part in the study. Therefore it was convenient to coincide the time of the focus group session in each area with their monthly meeting and this arrangement followed many months of relationship building.

The focus groups were split into two clear stages. An initial focus group invited support workers who work with adults with learning difficulties across South Wales to take part. This enabled the researcher to gain some further understanding of the issues/concerns that these professionals believed adults with learning difficulties faced. As previously discussed, the initial review of literature had highlighted three main areas of concern, firstly that adults with learning difficulties experience high levels of crime and disability hate crime. Secondly, it identified that these crimes often go unreported and finally of the cases that are reported to the police, very few result in a conviction. These issues were discussed with the support workers to gain their thoughts and perspectives. This enabled effective planning of the focus groups that were to follow, which would be carried out with adults who have learning difficulties.

Specific thoughts that were helpful in the planning of subsequent focus groups were that the duration of each focus group should not be more than two hours because the groups were to be held at times convenient to the groups. Members met once a month for a few hours, and it was felt that two hours would be an appropriate length of time, as any longer than this and the members may have missed out on the other activities and support they received during these meeting days. All members of the groups should have the opportunity to take part in the focus group if they wanted to. The discussions would need to be easily captured on audio tape, as this would be the easiest way to record what was discussed and leave the researcher free to observe the interaction between the participants. The use of visual aids which would facilitate discussion was approved by the support workers. These photographs (see Appendix E) would hopefully prompt feelings/views, and would focus conversation on the topics that the researcher wanted to address.

Contact with support workers from each area was a crucial step in the process as the support workers were to become potential gatekeepers for the purpose of this research. Effective relationships with the support workers therefore enabled contact with members of the groups.

3.5.4 Design of the Focus Groups

The design of the focus groups was given much consideration. In order to establish the appropriate amount of respondents per focus group, consideration was given to the following:

- Suggested topics from the literature
- Time and resources
- Attendees at regular monthly support group meetings

Many commentators recommend the appropriate number of respondents in each focus group range between six to fifteen people (Krueger and Casey, 2000; Litosseliti, 2003). When the

researcher is able to predict what data the next focus group will generate, the data collection should cease, as a saturation point has been reached (Bryman, 2011), although Bryman acknowledges that this is at times difficult to assess, arguing that a saturation point may never occur as there is a possibility that new opinions may be expressed, and new themes emerge. Ethical and moral consideration was given to the possibility of data saturation. From the standpoint of ethics it might be viewed unethical to allow participants to participate in research when there is no possibility of new findings being discovered. On the other hand, it could be considered to be immoral to inform participants who have agreed to take part in the research process that their participation was no longer required, given the arrangements and commitment that had already been made. Much deliberation was given to this, and it was concluded that the focus groups would be carried out and completed even if the researcher felt that saturation point had been reached. All the data gathered during the course of the focus groups would be considered which would minimise the ethical dilemma. It was felt that if many respondents reported similar issues and concerns, then this would further strengthen the research.

It was decided during the initial focus group with support workers that the focus groups with the members of the organisation who have learning difficulties would take place during their monthly meeting at their local venues. The participants are familiar with these venues and holding the focus groups at these times would be most convenient to them, minimising disruption. The researcher would be able to see more people this way, and costs would be reduced. The venues had all the facilities they required, including access to tea/coffee facilities, toilets, additionally disabled access was available.

It was difficult to determine how many participants would attend each session as members could come and go as they please. Consequently, this part of the process was unpredictable,

and some of the groups were considerably larger than others. This was managed by breaking the larger groups into smaller, more manageable sizes if necessary.

All of the focus groups were audio taped with the consent of participants. The discussions from each of the focus groups were transcribed by the researcher which, despite being extremely time consuming, facilitated familiarity with the data and assisted during the analysis phase. The use of audio tapes brought with it further ethical consideration. Leggett et al (2007) propose that the use of audio tapes may be viewed aversively, especially due to the sensitive nature of the research. Firstly, there may be fear that participants would feel that they were under interrogation by the researcher as their comments were being recorded. Furthermore, respondents may have felt concerned about how the audio tapes were going to be used, and assume they given to the police. During this research study this concern was overcome by the researcher taking time to explain to all respondents the rationale for the use of the audio tape, how the tapes would be stored and how they would be used. Reassurance was given to all individuals that only the researcher would listen to the tapes during the transcribing process. At this time of reassurance and explanation, respondents were invited to verbally consent to the recording of the discussion. None of the participants objected to audio recordings taking place.

3.5.5 Content of the Focus Groups

Careful consideration was given to the questions and prompts that could be used during the focus group as the researcher was mindful that it was important to be able to prompt discussion without leading the group. The researcher used open questions which allowed full, rich data to flow. The researcher was careful not to convey approval or disapproval in any verbal or non-verbal responses to the group, which could have been seen to lead the group (Evans, 2010).

There is often interest in the involvement of adults with learning difficulties in social research, yet this interest rarely extends to adults who have more profound difficulties. In an attempt to involve and engage people with learning difficulties in qualitative research, visual methodologies have developed, such as videos and photography. These developments have opened up opportunities for people with communication difficulties to contribute to social research (Boxall, 2011; Rose, 2001; Prosser and Loxley, 2008; Banks, 2001). The visual emphasis of these research methodologies enable researchers to engage participants as they can be more accessible than traditional text or conversation based approaches.

Much deliberation was given to the most appropriate method to generate data within a focus group setting and to this end, the method referred to as 'photo-elicitation' was explored.

3.5.6 Photo Elicitation

Photo elicitation has been used for a number of years to encourage respondents and participants of social research to discuss topics in question, (Rosenblum, 1997), and is becoming an increasingly popular method of data collection (Tinkler, 2013). Photographs can be used to encourage comments, evoke memories and prompt discussion (Banks, 2001). The photographs used during an interview/focus group can be the respondents/participants own personal photographs but most commonly the researcher will select photographs specifically for the research study (Banks, 2001) and this is sometimes referred to as 'autodriving' (Heisley and Levy, 1991).

Tinkler (2013) suggests there are two key purposes for the use of photo elicitation. Firstly they encourage dialogue between the interviewer and the interviewee(s) and can serve as an ice-breaker, acting somewhat like a 'third party' in interviews (Collier and Collier, 1986). Secondly they can generate some rich, useful data as they can foster a relaxed atmosphere in which the research participants feel less pressure. Schwartz (1989) suggests that

respondents/participants can respond directly to the photographs if they feel more comfortable, and they can pay less heed to the interviewer. There is less need for direct eye contact (Prosser and Burke, 2006).

Much reflection was given to the pilot research carried out, and the methods of gathering data during these interviews. It was decided that the use of visual aids during the focus groups would be appropriate for a variety of reasons. It was hoped that the photographs would encourage the participants to consider how they view the police, prompting discussion. The researcher selected a variety of photographs, ensuring a broad spectrum of images were chosen, portraying the police in various settings and carrying out a variety of policing functions in order to gain an extensive range of views, opinions, perceptions and feelings. The selection of photographs was shown to the participants during the first stage of the focus groups to gain the opinion of support workers as to the appropriateness of the images.

3.5.7 Role of the researcher within the focus group setting

During this stage of the research study, the role of the researcher was crucial. The researcher must be aware that the purpose of the focus group is to gain an insight into the views, opinions and perceptions of respondents, not to inform, teach, resolve conflict or make decisions (Morgan, 1997). There are potentially issues that can occur which require some consideration by the researcher, for example the potential for bias and manipulation by the researcher/facilitator.

Prior to the focus groups taking place, much thought was given to these potential issues, and the conclusions drawn included:

- The researcher could be perceived to hold certain views in relation to the police, which could influence/prompt participants to respond in a certain way.
- The researcher should be cautious to avoid the use of leading questions, as these could result in respondents saying what they think the researcher wants to hear.

- Some respondents may be more vocal than others, and there is the potential for them to impose their views on the rest of the group.

It was important that the researcher was not viewed as a figure of authority as the participants could feel intimidated and doubt their role within the group, and thus fail to contribute to the discussion (Fraser and Fraser, 2001). It was also necessary for the researcher to reflect upon their own experiences, views and values in relation to the topic to be discussed to ensure they could be identified and bracketed prior to the research taking place, something that Bowling (2009) suggest is important if the researcher wishes to minimise researcher bias.

Fraser and Fraser (2001) continue to suggest the researcher's familiarity with a setting can be viewed as controversial. Bogdan and Taylor (1984) agree stating that there is a need for detachment in order for the researcher to maintain critical distance, although it is argued that more meaningful interaction can take place when the researcher and participants have a closeness and understanding which can only be achieved if the researcher is familiar with the setting and has some understanding of the topic being researched (Chiu and Knight, 1999).

For the purpose of this research study, it was felt that in order to ensure the researcher did not intimidate the participants with an air of authority, it was necessary for there to be a certain degree of familiarity with the participants, so that they would feel comfortable taking part. This is something that was discussed with support workers during the many months leading up to the data gathering stage.

Holding the focus groups in the centres where these adults with learning difficulties meet on a regular basis was preferable as travelling to a neutral premises would have introduced disruption to the participants day, something that it was felt better to avoid so that the participants felt comfortable and familiar with their surroundings (Fraser and Fraser, 2001).

The participants were also familiar and comfortable with each other as they met on a regular basis. This is seen to be advantageous as they would be less wary of each other and potentially more likely to contribute to discussion.

3.5.8 Data Analysis

A qualitative research study that is informed by phenomenology, which seeks to explore the experiences of individuals, will undoubtedly generate a large corpus of textual material/data. This is one of the main difficulties associated with qualitative research (Bryman, 2011). As this study was informed by phenomenology it was important to gain understanding regarding phenomenological methods of data analysis. A common feature of phenomenological research is that a researcher will intensively analyse individual cases in order to seek common themes (Bazeley, 2007). Three methods of data analysis commonly used with regard to descriptive phenomenology are those of Colaizzi (1978), Giorgi (1975) and Van Kamm (1969), all from the Duquesne school of phenomenology. There are important variations in these approaches, Colaizzi (1978) suggests that once detailed transcripts have been thoroughly read by the researcher, significant statements extracted, themes identified and the fundamental structure of a concept identified the researcher will return to the participants of the research seeking validation. Van Kamm (1969) on the other hand suggests that other expert judges are required to provide inter-subjective agreement. Giorgi (1975) states that analysis of the research data be carried out solely by the researcher, suggesting it is inappropriate to return to the research participants or to use external judges in order to validate the findings.

There is extensive literature that describes underlying procedures with regard to the analysis of qualitative data, many of which surround approaches such as grounded theory (Strauss and Corbin, 1990) and narrative analysis (Coffey and Atkinson, 2004). However there are some

analytical approaches to qualitative data analysis that are generic, although these are not labelled (Pope et al, 2000; Silverman, 2000). For the purpose of this research grounded theory and narrative analysis were explored to ensure the most fitting framework for data analysis was chosen.

Grounded Theory is one of the most widely used frameworks for the analysis of qualitative data according to Bryman (2011), although providing an account of this approach is not uncomplicated. The development of theory out of the data is a key feature, and constant comparison of data and theory is prominent (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), a researcher may wish to continue collecting data after concepts have been developed (Bryman, 2011). Narrative analysis is particularly prominent in association with life history or bibliographic research, as it is concerned with the search for and analysis of life stories that people employ to understand the world around them (Bryman, 2011; Roberts, 2002). There are four models of narrative analysis, to include performative analysis which studies the narrative in the form of a performance, i.e. the use of gestures and words; interactional analysis which places an emphasis on the dialogue between the listener and teller; structural analysis which is concerned with the way a story is recounted, and thematic analysis which places importance on what was said, not how it was said (Bryman, 2011). Thematic analysis was the framework used to analyse the data generated during this study. The rationale for this decision relates to the importance of enabling research findings to emerge from the data without the constraints imposed by the learning of new technical terms encompassed within phenomenological approaches to data analysis. According to Bryman (2011) thematic analysis is one of the most common approaches to analysing qualitative data, but it can lack formal specified procedure (Bryman, 2011). However, Ryan and Bernard (2003) provide a framework to assist researchers in their quest to identify themes. It is suggested that researchers look for:

- Repetitions – themes that occur again and again.
- Indigenous typologies or categories – expressions that are typical to the local area that may be unfamiliar.
- Metaphors and analogies – that participants may use descriptively.
- Transitions – shifts in topics.
- Similarities and differences – exploring how participant's opinions on topics can differ or display similarities.
- Linguistic connectors – words such as 'since' or 'because' as these indicate causal connections.
- Missing data – exploring what might be missing from the data, participants may omit answers to questions.
- Theory related material – identifying themes with the use of social scientific concepts.

As a starting point, with the framework provided by Ryan and Bernard (2003) in mind the researcher carefully read through the transcripts of all focus groups with a view to identifying themes as soon as possible. The transcripts were read through carefully more than once to ensure the researcher was familiar with the texts. At this point computer software called NVivo, a tool that assists with analysis of qualitative data, was adopted to facilitate the coding and organisation of all documents. Computer software and its ability to record, sort, link, and match can be utilised to good effect by a qualitative researcher, indeed NVivo enables a researcher to manage data, manage ideas, query data, graphically modify data and report from the data (Bazeley, 2007). Cohen et al (2000) recommend that a researcher, at this point, carries out some 'culling' in order to refine the themes. The coding process used during this study comprised of four stages, as outlined in Table 10.

Table 10: The Coding Process.

Initial read through of transcript	Identify specific segments of text	Label segments of information to create themes using NVivo software	Reduce overlap and duplication among themes
Many pages of text	Many segments of text	30-40 themes	15-20 themes

(Adapted from Cresswell, 1994).

The criteria applied to underpin this exercise related to the merging of themes that had the same meaning. It may be claimed that if a theme is only reported by one or two participants it is still important to the study.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

Consideration to an ethical research approach took place as this was a sensitive piece of research due to the potential vulnerability of the participants involved. The researcher had a moral duty to ensure all participants and interviewees were treated fairly and ethically. Diener and Crandall (1978:19) suggest that there are four main areas that need to be considered with regard to ethical principles in research:

- Whether there is harm to participants
- Whether there is a lack of informed consent
- Whether there is an invasion of privacy
- Whether deception is involved

These principles appear to overlap at times. Bryman (2011) suggests that it is difficult to imagine a research project where informed consent could be built into research where the respondents/participants had been deceived. 'Harm' was considered by Diener and Crandall (1978) to include physical harm, stress, loss of self-esteem, inducing respondents to perform reprehensible acts, and harm to the respondents' development.

The University of South Wales, like all universities, provide brief guidance for a researcher in the complex area of ethics (University of South Wales, 2008). They recommend that a researcher treats people fairly, respecting the autonomy of individuals who are taking part in the research. They require the researcher to act with integrity and to seek the best results whilst avoiding or minimising harm to others. It is advised that special care should be given when the research involves working with vulnerable groups; access to confidential information; sensitive topics; and groups who are only accessed through a gatekeeper (University of South Wales, 2008).

There is evidence to suggest that research ethics committees have been cautious with regards to the approval of qualitative research studies involving 'vulnerable' adults (Hannigan and Allen, 2003). As discussed, the role of an ethics committee is to prevent potentially vulnerable people from being harmed by research. However, Boxall (2011) believes that there is potential for participants with learning difficulties to gain positive experiences from being involved in research.

Generally the concept of an ethical approach to research is seen as being associated with morality, and giving a researcher the standpoint from which to determine what is right and what is wrong. In effect, what we ought to do or what we ought not do (Rowson, 2006; Babbie, 2011). However, Babbie (2011) poses some questions for consideration. How do we know what is right and what is wrong? How do we come about the distinction? The answers to these questions can vary. Each individual will have a different perception, whether that be political, religious or possibly a pragmatic observation of what works or what does not work. In order to provide an answer to these questions. Babbie continues to discuss general agreements shared by social science researchers regarding what is considered proper or improper in the conduct of such research, to include the principles that all participation is

voluntary, no harm comes to the participant, and anonymity and confidentiality be honoured (Babbie, 2011).

For this particular study, ethical consideration was given to the wellbeing of the respondents. In order to ensure they would be protected from harm the researcher submitted an application to the University of South Wales Ethics Committee prior to the commencement of the study, and the appropriate approval was granted. The application outlined the steps that the researcher would undertake to ensure no harm came to any participants, steps such as extensive consultation with support workers during the planning stage of the research. It was decided that respondents would be given detailed information regarding the research, the time necessary to decide whether they wanted to take part, along with the knowledge that they could, at any time during the process, change their mind and rescind their participation with absolutely no consequence then the researcher was taking adequate steps to ensure participation was voluntary. Consideration was also given to how the researcher could ensure participants received detailed information to enable them to make an informed decision with regards to their participation; ensure they were able to consent to their participation; the confidentiality and anonymity of the respondents; and concerns over the use of audio tapes. These considerations will be discussed in detail later in this chapter.

3.6.1 Access

Access to this section of our community was given much thought. The process of gaining and maintaining access to a particular group that may be considered hard to reach, or establishing a meaningful, working relationship with people in order to carry out a research study can be one of the most difficult steps, but is key to the research process (Bell, 2005 cited in Bryman, 2011; Jupp, 2006). If there are any official channels that need to be cleared, these should be addressed prior to the data collection stage of the research process (Bell,

2005). Bell believes it would be unethical to commence any form of data collection without prior permission from the people/body being researched, and if appropriate a "contract" established. Blaxter et al (2001) explain that a research contract can be useful, and these are often in the form of an agreement regarding the interview process, questions that will be asked, observations that will be made, how data will be analysed, reported and disseminated. These agreements/contracts can be reached prior to the research commencing. For the purpose of this research, contact was made with the 'People First' organisation, and it became clear that there was no official body to obtain permission from. All support staff and participants alike welcomed the research and the opportunity to participate. Once an agreement had been made that the researcher could obtain access to members of this group, the subject of sampling was given consideration.

3.6.2 Sampling

Due to the sensitive nature of this research and the requirement to speak to members of a particular section of the community, who may be considered difficult to access, i.e. adults with learning difficulties, the snowball technique of sampling was adopted. The use of snowball sampling enables the researcher to make contact with a small group of individuals who are relevant to the research, and through these respondents, make contact with other respondents, accumulating more and more people from the target population as the research progresses (Bryman, 2011; Babbie, 2011; Monette et all, 2011). In addition, Monette et al (2011) suggest that this sampling method is preferable where the respondents feel hesitant to take part if they are approached by someone they don't know.

It is not possible to make generalisations when using snowball sampling as it is unlikely that the sample will be representative of the population (Bryman, 2011). This snowball technique will only reach members of the population who are involved in the particular social network,

missing out those who are isolated from such networks. As this research aims to provide an insight and not make wider generalisations, this method of sampling was thought to be the most appropriate, as it would provide relatively easy access to an ordinarily difficult to reach section of our communities.

Recruitment of participants for this research project was therefore less challenging than originally expected. The long established support network of 'People First' within the geographical area was approached and invited to take part in the research as discussed previously. Appendix A illustrates the correspondence exchanged between researcher and 'People First'. A relationship with the first group was developed during the preliminary research phase, and allowed for the research to be carried out. Members of this group expressed their interest in taking part in the research, as they wanted their views, feelings and voices to be heard. For the purpose of broadening the research and gaining data from other geographical locations, other branches of the 'People First' organisation from other areas were approached and connections established. Many meetings were held with the support workers in all the areas in order to develop relationships and determine which members would like to take part. Consideration was given to how participants would be recruited. It could have been possible to write to all potential participants, but this would require them to reply in writing, and it was felt that it may compromise the recruitment process as not all would reply. It was decided instead to visit the members of these organisations, and make personal contact on a date prior to the research taking place. The researcher had many opportunities to discuss the research with all potential participants to explain what it would entail in detail. The relationship between the researcher and the support workers became extremely important, with the support workers becoming 'gatekeepers' in this research process.

3.6.3 The Role of "Gatekeeper"

> *"Commonly, a gatekeeper protects the population of potential respondents. The gatekeeper is an individual who can affect the likelihood of a respondent's cooperating with the interviewer".*
> (Crano and Brewer, 2002:237)

Crano and Brewer (2002) highlight an important point, and point out that a gatekeeper's role is to protect the population of potential respondents. The researcher wanted to ensure no harm came to any participants therefore the role of a 'gatekeeper' was vital. They were able to be present during the data collection phase and protect the interests of participants.

The gatekeeper plays a crucial role as gaining access to desired groups in order to carry out research can be problematic. The gatekeeper is often in complete control of research access. Without the permission of the gatekeeper it is unlikely that access to the groups will be permitted in practice (Jupp, 2006).

The identification of the most suitable person to become the gatekeeper within a formal organisation can be reasonably straightforward. As mentioned, it could be a senior executive or manager of the company, or someone else in authority. In contrast, it is more difficult in less formal settings, such as a gang, or small group of people to ascertain the most appropriate person to approach as a gatekeeper. A key characteristic of a gatekeeper is their position within the group, commanding others within the group (Jupp, 2006).

As well as controlling the access to the group, gatekeepers often become sponsors, championing the value of the research and vouching for the researcher (Bryman, 2011). Jupp (2006) suggests that a gatekeeper will need to be convinced of the research in order to allow the researcher access, although there may be circumstances where the gatekeeper will decline access despite supporting the research in principle. This may be because of issues concerning confidentiality, the sensitivity of the topic to be researched or a general concern regarding time and resource constraints. If the gatekeeper belongs to a large organisation, they may hold a differing view to the researcher regarding how much time participants should

dedicate to the process. The researcher needs to acknowledge and recognise these potential problems and consider them during the access negotiation phase (Saunders et al, 2003). All of the support workers involved in this research acted as gatekeepers, and each were extremely positive and supportive of the study. During the relationship building phase of the research, many discussions were held and reassurance provided that the wellbeing of the participants was paramount. The support workers had sufficient time to ensure the participants genuinely wanted to take part and understood the process and detail. At no point did any participant exhibit any signs that they did not want to take part, and most demonstrated a strong desire to have their voices, stories and experiences heard.

Buchanan et al (1988) proposes that some researchers may want to offer something in return for the participation in the research. In the case of a large organisation, this may present itself in the form of a summary report of the research findings. However, Bryman (2011) states that not all researchers and commentators recommend this approach to recruiting or securing a gatekeeper as it could undermine the research that is being carried out and possibly restrict the researcher's activities. The organisation may want to insist on seeing what the researcher is writing. With regards to this research study 'People First' did not ask to see what the researcher was writing, however, the researcher agreed to provide feedback regarding the findings as a matter of courtesy.

The groups to which access was required for this study did not require a formal process of application to be undertaken, therefore the researcher was able to build relationships with potential gatekeepers with relative ease as all parties approached welcomed the research, recognising the importance of raising issues. It was decided that support workers who worked for members of the 'People First' organisation would be approached along with full details of the research in the first instance being provided.

A connection was made with a support worker in 'Area One' initially, and once an agreement was made for access to the group and a relationship of trust developed, this gatekeeper was responsible for introducing the researcher to potential gatekeepers in the other three areas studied as part of this research. The areas correspond with the divisional areas within South Wales Police. The areas will not be identified throughout the research in order to ensure confidentiality of all participants.

Throughout the research, gatekeepers provided full support and genuinely welcomed the researcher, championing and promoting the research as a topic they felt was important and worthy of inquiry because they have witnessed issues and difficulties experienced by members of their groups. They desire to see improvements in the engagement process between the police and adults with learning difficulties, embracing the process, recognising that it could provide significant insight. As previously mentioned, it was not necessary to offer anything in return for access to the groups, other than to keep the gatekeepers informed of the progress of research findings and assurance from the researcher that continued consideration would be given to the welfare of participants due to the sensitivity of the research topic, and potential concerns regarding confidentiality. Continuous reassurance was provided throughout the process to the support workers and participants regarding ethical considerations to alleviate any concerns before they arose. The researcher provided written information (see Appendix B) prior to carrying out the focus groups, and verbally discussed procedures and the process of safeguarding confidentiality and anonymity at regular stages during the process.

3.6.4 Confidentiality and Anonymity

Sapsford and Abbott (1996:318-319) when writing about a participant's involvement in research suggest that:

"Interviewing is intrusive, but having your personal details splashed in identifiable form across a research project is even more intrusive"
(Sapsford and Abbott 1996: 318-319).

It is often the case that respondents who take part in research go through a process of negotiation, agreeing terms before the study commences. They may stipulate that any information obtained about them during the course of the research can only be used by the researchers, and only in specified ways. The researcher must respect that this private information is shared voluntarily in confidence often with no direct benefit to the respondent (Jupp, 2006). The consequences of a researcher breaking such an agreement regarding confidentiality and anonymity may prove significant and present difficulties with future research efforts as respondents may lose trust and the possibility that it may damage the prospects of other social scientists undertaking similar research. It was very important during this research study that participants felt comfortable and confident that discussions with the researcher would remain confidential and that a full understanding of the differences between confidentiality and anonymity was achieved.

3.6.5 Confidentiality

Confidentiality is described by Jupp (2006) as the principle that information regarding respondents and participants in research should be considered as private and only revealed in the research with the participants consent. Sapsford and Abbott (2006) continue to explain that if a respondent has been promised confidentiality by a researcher then the information they give will not be presented in an identifiable format and they will not be identified.

3.6.6 Anonymity

If a researcher promises a person their anonymity, not even the researcher should be able to identify the respondent. Therefore if anonymity is promised, there is no opportunity to carry

out follow up interviews or send out follow up letters (Sapsford and Abbott, 1996; Babbie, 2011; Bryman, 2011).

It is, however, acknowledged that there may be occasions where respondents would prefer not to be anonymous, instead wishing to take credit for work they have done, or for their views and opinions to be recognised and acknowledged. Some commentators suggest researchers must be mindful of the consequences of including names of respondents/participants in research reports, particularly if the report is to be published more widely. It is possible that the respondent may be exposed to repercussions if they are recognisable. These issues should be discussed with respondents prior to the inclusion of people's actual names in any research study (University of Sheffield, 2013).

3.6.7 Justifying Confidentiality

There are three main arguments that support and justify the case for confidentiality. The first is the consequential argument which examines the results of ethical practices, and gives consideration to what would happen during the research process if these ethical practices were not present. For example, respondents may be reluctant to take part in research if the information they provide were to be freely disseminated to other parties.

The second argument is rights-based. A person's right to privacy rests on the principle of respect for personal independence and autonomy (Beauchamp and Childress, 2001). Some things should not and cannot be concealed. However, people have the right, as far as possible, to make the decision as to what happens to them. Within the research arena participants should be able to maintain private information and secrets, deciding what information people have access to about them (Jupp, 2006).

The third argument is fidelity-based and suggests that researchers should respect bonds and promises associated with research and they should remain loyal to them. A researcher offers

a participant to their research a promise of secrecy and to guard their confidentiality, this promise has to be honoured (Jupp, 2006; Babbie, 2011; Sapsford and Abbott, 1996; Bryman, 2011).

In many cases negotiations regarding the maintenance of confidentiality are relatively straightforward, as researchers can work in predictable contexts where assurances may be included in standard forms that can be included in a covering letter, for example with a questionnaire.

However, other researchers may be working in areas that are less formal and more unpredictable. In such cases, agreements need to be talked through and topics such as confidentiality need to be negotiated and sometimes re-negotiated if the study involves a lengthy piece of fieldwork (Jupp, 2006).

For the purpose of this research study, participants were invited to participate from different areas across South Wales as described earlier. None of the potential participants expressed a desire to have their names made known during this process. Therefore it was decided early in the research that the locations of research would not be identifiable and a guarantee of confidentiality was given. Therefore it is not possible for anyone to know which area the respondents came from. The respondents were not named, and referred to as Respondent A, B, and C etc. The use of pseudonyms in order to offer a research participant confidentiality is often viewed as good practice when considering the involvement of adults with learning difficulties particularly when the topic being researched is of a sensitive nature. The process of providing potential respondents with information regarding confidentiality and anonymity is important if a researcher is to provide sufficient detail about the research to enable them to make an ‘informed’ decision with regards to participation.

3.6.8 Informed Consent

Researchers need to be cognisant of the need to ensure informed consent is a prerequisite of research participation (Marshall, 2007). Key to achieving this is to provide adequate information regarding the research process, the purpose and scope of the research, the types of questions that would be asked during the focus group, how the results of the research will be used, and how the confidentiality of the participants will be protected (Richards and Schwartz, 2002). Further, the ability of participants to retract from the research should be provided.

In all research of this type, participants should not only be provided with adequate information regarding the research, but the researcher must ensure that respondents are capable of understanding the information provided. Participants should be free to decide whether they wish to take part in the research or not. This voluntary participation is crucial (Polit and Beck, 2007; Marshall, 2007). Therefore, obtaining informed consent is important, possibly more so when it is the consent of an adult with learning difficulties due to their potential vulnerability (Wiles et al, 2008).

The University of Sheffield (2013) suggest that many people with learning disabilities are able to understand verbal or written information about the research, and are also able to decide for themselves whether they want to participate or not. It is worth considering that some may not be able to understand the terminology used by researchers in verbal explanations, or may be unable to read written communication provided by the researcher. It may be useful in such situations for the researcher to produce information sheets which outline the research, or possibly a DVD for them to watch in their own time. The 'picture banks' produced by CHANGE in 2004, which are a collection of pictures and drawings developed with and by people who have learning difficulties were considered a vital resource in the production of easy to read information sheets (Corbett, 2007; CHANGE, 2013).

Obtaining the views and perceptions of a person with learning difficulties can be a challenging process, particularly if the person has impaired communications skills. Mansell (2010) suggests that in some cases, where the learning disabilities are more severe, profound or the respondent has multiple disabilities, researchers may not be able to communicate directly with the individual. In such cases, the use of an interpreter or proxy respondent may be required. This can raise further ethical issues (Stancliffe, 1999; Clements et al, 1999). It is important that relatives and carers are mindful that there is a boundary between providing support during the research process and making decisions on their behalf, a boundary that is often blurred (Lloyd et al, 1996). All the respondents in this research had mild learning difficulties, therefore the use of a proxy respondent or interpreter was not considered necessary.

It has been suggested that some people with very severe learning disabilities may not possess the ability to consent to the participation in research (The University of Sheffield, 2013). However, it is important not to assume that is the case and decisions regarding capacity to consent to research are situation specific. Whilst an individual may not be able to consent to one piece of research, they may possess the capacity to consent to another piece of research. The Department of Health (2008) discusses this dilemma of consent, and suggests the use of a 'consultee' who is responsible for advising the researcher about individual's who lack capacity. They should be able to discuss their wishes and feelings in relation to the research study on the respondent's behalf. Such use of formalised procedures for gaining consent of people with intellectual disabilities is relatively new in the UK, but surrogate or proxy procedures have been in place for obtaining consent for several years in Australia and North America (Griffin and Balandin, 2004; Iacono and Murray, 2003; Iacono, 2006). Whilst these approaches being used appear to be helpful when gaining consent where an individual lacks the capacity in practice they have proven to be complex, and there are concerns that

researchers may be over-relying on surrogate or proxy consultees' in order to satisfy the ever increasing stringent requirements of University Research Ethics Committees (McVilly and Dalton, 2006). It is acknowledged by the researcher in this study that this is a complex matter, however, whilst researchers need to be considerate of the issues discussed, there is a danger that they will perhaps become discouraged from researching topics where participants are deemed to lack capacity to consent to participate in the research process because of the stringent requirements of ethical approval procedures that are in place to protect vulnerable research participants. This according to the Department of Health (2009) could be an unwelcome and unintended consequence of procedures in place to protect the vulnerable. This same guidance information sheet suggests that responses that are submitted on behalf of people 'without capacity' should not be included in general surveys that do not have Mental Capacity Act (2005) approval. This would suggest that adults with learning disabilities could miss out in participating in important research, which in itself could be considered an ethical issue, as they have a right to be included. (Boxall and Ralph, 2009).

A researcher needs to be mindful therefore when recruiting respondents within a care service setting, such as a day centre that respondents may be confused as to whether the researchers are service providers or not, they may feel obliged to consent and later feel unable to withdraw for fear of 'penalties' or a loss of services that they currently receive. These problems are a direct relevance in relation to consent to participate in this research study (University of Sheffield, 2013).

For the purpose of this research, relationships were built up over a period of time between the researcher, respondents with learning difficulties and their support workers in order to develop trust. The research was discussed with all participants on at least one occasion before the research took place. Respondents were invited to take part if they wished, and the vast majority of people approached stated they would like to participate. The support

workers were present when the research study was discussed with potential respondents as this was deemed to be important to the researcher as the support workers had greater knowledge of the participants and their capabilities. The respondents would then be able and perhaps more comfortable to ask any questions or raise any queries they may have, either whilst the researcher was present or with the support workers once the researcher had left the premises if they felt more comfortable. Potential respondents were made aware that they did not have to feel obliged to take part, and that there would be no 'comeback' or consequences if they declined. None of the respondents who are members of the 'People First' organisation had severe learning difficulties, and it was felt by the support workers and the researcher that all the participants had the ability to understand the process and provide genuine, informed consent.

Prior to the commencement of data gathering, the researcher outlined once more the aims of the research, the process of the research study, and confirmation was obtained that all the participants were indeed consenting to participate in the research. (See Appendix C for a copy of the consent form).

Once the ethical issues had been considered, thought was then afforded to the subject of research methods, and which data collection method would be most appropriate.

3.7 Conclusion

To conclude, it is extremely important that a researcher has a broad understanding of research methodologies and methods in order to be able to design samples, lay out questionnaires, gather and analyse data. This chapter discussed the various considerations that the researcher was faced with in order to carry out this sensitive piece of research which aimed to engage with adults who have learning difficulties in the South Wales area and learn of their

experiences. The researcher was particularly interested in their experiences of hate crime, their interaction/relationship/engagement with the police and whether they felt able to report incidents/crime to the police. These topics were of interest to the researcher as a significant review of the literature suggested three important issues. The first issue was that adults with learning difficulties are more likely to experience high levels crime and disability hate crime. Secondly, these crimes often go unreported. The final issue is that of all the cases that are reported to the police, very few make it to court, and few result in a conviction.

The researcher felt that the reason for this is that adults with learning difficulties are often marginalised and socially excluded therefore explored the subject of social inclusion (Riddell et al, 2001; Sheppard, 2006) and the importance of gaining an understanding of the views and opinions of these potentially marginalised members of our society.

Considerable thought was given to the methodological approach that should be adopted due to the sensitivity of the proposed research and participants that would be invited to take part. Qualitative and quantitative research methods were explored and it was decided that as this research aimed to discover the opinions, perspectives and feelings of individuals and was not seeking to generalise, than qualitative research methods would be most appropriate.

Whilst it was important to invite potentially marginalised, vulnerable adults to take part in the research, the researcher was aware that this brought with it a multitude of ethical considerations. The researcher was required to ensure that no harm came to any participants, and that all participants were fully informed of the research process and therefore able to make an informed decision regarding their consent, that there was no invasion of privacy and that there was no deception involved. Extensive consultation with the support workers who work with the participants took place to ensure the researcher took all possible steps to prevent any harm to the participants.

The relationship with support workers proved to be vital, indeed they became the 'gatekeepers' in this research process, allowing the researcher access to this particular group of adults, through the process of snowball sampling, playing an important role in ensuring the research was carried out ethically. Each participant was offered confidentiality during regular meetings prior to the research taking place, it was thought to be important to the researcher that participants were confident that their identities would be confidential. During the meetings with potential participants the researcher ensured adequate information was given about the process in order for the participant to be well informed, prior to giving their consent. The gatekeepers played a vital role in this as they know the participants sufficiently well and were able to give their opinion on whether a satisfactory level of understanding was achieved.

The research was carried out in four areas across the South Wales Police Service area, focus groups were carried out in each area. This allowed the researcher to potentially highlight any differences in the engagement process across the police service area. This geographically small area contains almost half the population of Wales.

Focus groups were the chosen method of collecting data as the researcher felt more people could be given the opportunity to participate. Photographs of police officers in a variety of policing settings were used to prompt discussion. Consultation with participants prior to the data collection revealed that participants thought they would be more comfortable discussing potentially sensitive topics with their peers within a focus group setting. During the piloting stage, semi-structured one-to-one interviews were the chosen method of data collection, this was felt to be a less appropriate method upon reflection. Participants seemed to want to please the researcher which is typical of the Hawthorne effect.

All the focus groups were recorded and transcribed. The transcripts were read and re-read in order to identify themes. The use of NVivo software to support the coding and retrieval of data facilitated the data analysis process.

Chapter Four

The Process and Findings

Stage One of the Study

Understanding the Experiences of Adults with Learning Difficulties in the Area of South Wales from the View Point of Support Workers

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will provide discussion regarding the process of data collection and results gained during stage one of the study. Stage one of the study consisted of focus groups with professionals who work with adults who have learning difficulties on a daily basis. As discussed in the research methodology chapter of this study, these professionals, who are employed as support workers by the People First organisation acted as 'gate keepers' in the research process, facilitating recruitment of adults with learning difficulties who would take part in stage two of the data collection phase. They were not only in a position to champion the research, but were able to ensure the process was carried out in an ethical manner, thus protecting the population of potential participants from harm (Crano and Brewer, 2002). Obtaining the views and perceptions of these professionals was considered a vital stage in the process. Key issues that were identified during a review of the literature were discussed during stage one of the focus groups in order to determine whether the support workers had any views on these, and also whether they felt there were other issues that had not arisen from the literature review.

4.2 Findings from Stage One

The aim of the first stage of the research, as discussed previously, was to obtain a deeper understanding of the issues faced by adults with learning difficulties through the eyes of support workers who work with adults who have learning difficulties on a daily basis. In order to gain qualitative data from across South Wales, support workers were invited to take part in two focus groups, eight support workers per focus group. The support workers are under the employment of the 'People First' organisation and therefore would prove to be a vital link between the researcher and subsequent participants, acting as 'gatekeepers' and champions in the process as discussed previously. The researcher ensured each participant had sufficient experience working with adults who have learning difficulties. The majority of participants had many years' experience in this field. The main purpose of the focus group sessions at this stage was to discuss the key issues that arose from the literature review, in order to obtain an understanding if their experiences, inviting them to also discuss issues that they felt were relevant and important.

The topics and questions that arose from the literature review were discussed during the stage one focus groups. It was hoped that support workers may provide valuable insights into whether, in their opinion and experience, these issues exist within the areas they work. It must be remembered that the role of the support workers, within the People First organisation, is to provide day-to-day assistance to adults with learning difficulties, therefore it was felt that the support workers may be privy to important information regarding issues that affect these adults.

The questions asked during the focus groups were structured by the use of a topic guide (See Appendix F). This topic guide along with providing some structure, focussed and facilitated discussion between the participants.

Prior to the focus groups taking place, the researcher introduced herself and invited the participants to introduce themselves also. This provided some context and clarity as to the roles of those involved. The researcher also gave some information about herself, her background and how she came to be carrying out this research. This was thought to be important as the researcher was eager to develop a rapport, and ensure the participants understood the nature of the research, reinforcing once again, as to why the research was being undertaken, and how the data would be disseminated (Marshall, 2007). The researcher discussed a variety of ground rules that were to be adhered to during the course of the focus group. These included respecting the views of others, the importance of participants being non-judgemental and the reason why one person should speak at a time, which was to facilitate the accurate transcription of the recording. Each focus group lasted two hours, focusing on key areas. Table 11 overleaf provides an overview of the topics raised during the focus groups, along with the key themes that emerged from each topic.

Table 11: Stage One Focus Group Topics and Key Themes that Emerged.

Topic	Key Emerging Themes
1. Insights from support workers.	1. Experiences of hate crime. 2. Poor awareness of hate crime. 3. Effects of hate crime.
2. Evaluating the reporting of hate crime to the police.	1. Unwillingness to report crime. 2. Coping mechanisms. 3. Fear that the police won't believe victim. 4. Fear of repercussions if hate crime was reported to police. 5. Fear of the police. 6. Length of investigations. 7. Information available to victims. 8. Victim's experiences in court.
3. Interpretations of further support available to victims.	1. Provision of victim support. 2. Support from Social Worker.
4. Evaluation of the engagement process between the police and adults with learning difficulties along with recommendations for improvements in this process.	1. Proactive, positive steps towards engagement. 2. Improvements to police training. 3. Improved liaison with partner agencies.

The key themes identified in Table 11 emerged from an amalgamation of comments, views and opinions of participants from both stage one focus groups. It is important to reiterate that all the participants have experience of working with adults who have learning difficulties and they were invited to draw upon these day to day experiences in order to assist in this collection of the qualitative data, providing significant insight. As stated previously, the purpose of this study was not to make generalisations, but to gain some understanding into the experiences of adults with learning difficulties. Participants are referred to as A, B, C, and D etc. in order to protect their identities. Given the large number of quotations which

could have been used, they have been selected according to two criteria: illustrative of a particular theme and offering a view where there was heterogeneity. Each topic shown in Table 11 will be addressed separately and the themes explored in more detail below.

4.3 Insights from support workers.

This section provides some analysis of the experiences of adults with learning difficulties from the viewpoint of the professionals who support them. Responses articulated by the participants suggest that the members of People First who they support on a daily basis have over the years discussed a broad variety of incidents and crime and their discussions during the focus groups could be encapsulated into three themes. These were:

- Experiences of hate crime.
- Poor awareness of hate crime.
- Effects of hate crime.

4.3.1 Experiences of hate crime

All participants discussed times when the people they support within South Wales have relayed to them accounts of incidents of crime, hate crime, and disability hate crime that they regularly face. The support workers, who are in a position of trust, have daily contact with adults who have learning difficulties. The adults that these support workers work with fall within the Welsh Assembly Government (2000) definition of vulnerable adults, indeed they are unlikely to be able to protect themselves from harm or serious exploitation. The support workers have built a relationship with the people they support which is based upon trust; therefore it is wholly reasonable that the adults they support are able to confide in them. The

participants discussed many occasions where their members have approached them to inform them of their experiences of hate crime. Examples of incidents on public transport were given, all of which fall within the definition of hate crime provided by Voice UK (2012) which suggests the perpetrator targets a victims because of a prejudice they have towards them, Scope (2008) add that this is often driven by contempt, hatred and hostility towards the victim. Participant A describes occasions where adults she supports have been spat at on the bus, an action which indeed displays feelings of hatred, contempt and hostility.

> "they say they are always pointing and staring, some of our members see this on a regular basis, and just ignore it and they just accept it and then other times then, especially when they have been spat at and you know, hair pulling, somebody will sit behind them on the bus and pull their hair."
>
> Participant A.

Many examples were given of similar experiences of verbal abuse on public transport; it appears to be a prevalent issue. The prevalence of incidents such as these concur with reports by The Disability Rights Commission (2007) that nine out of ten people with learning difficulties have experienced hate crime, and do so on a regular basis.

Participant G provided an account of an experience one of her members described involving an employee of the local bus company. It must be remembered that this account was relayed to the support worker, who was not present at the time, therefore it is difficult to determine the exact details of the incident.

> "One of our ladies even received abuse from a bus driver once. He refused to let her on the bus because she had learning difficulties. She was really upset about that. I mean, how the hell did he know she has learning difficulties and what difference does it make anyway?"
>
> Participant G.

Many of the adults that the professionals support who took part in the focus groups have mild learning difficulties, which can vary considerably. Many of them are able to live independently and go about their daily lives with minimal assistance. Maintaining and

encouraging this independence is extremely important. Participant F also described an incident where a member of her group described difficulties she faced while travelling on the train, and the effect this had on her.

> "One of our members is very independent and capable. She had an incident where she was catching the train from London to ******. She had a group of older teenagers' right up in her face, mocking her and mimicking her. She was very frightened and nobody did anything to help. She won't catch the train on her own anymore."
>
> Participant F.

The experiences discussed by these participants are examples of attitudinal barriers that exist in society, which are displayed by the actions of people in society towards people with learning difficulties, or indeed people with physical disabilities. The attitudes displayed by the perpetrators of the incident discussed by Participant F will undoubtedly result in feelings of vulnerability, and the person targeted feeling marginalised and possibly 'disabled'. Disabled in the sense that she now feels unable to catch the train alone. Participant F continued to describe her frustration that as a support worker she felt powerless to help. Nichols and Quaye (2008) suggest that these negative attitudes displayed by teenagers on public transport are difficult to remove, as they are often deeply ingrained.

There was general agreement amongst the participants of all the stage one focus groups that incidents such as these occur on a regular basis, all of which would fall within the type of incident that is classed as hate crime by Scope (2008) and Thomas (2012), such as verbal abuse, threat of attack, harassment and physical assault. In fact, such incidents would fall within the boundaries of disability hate crime, first recognised in the Criminal Justice Act 2003 (Scope, 2008).

The participants in these focus groups also spoke about disability hate crimes being experienced whilst adults with learning difficulties are in their own homes as discussed below.

> "There is a lady in the ***** area who is being exposed to inappropriate behaviour outside her house. She lives independently on her own. It has taken her a while to come forward, [pause] she has been speaking to people, many of whom are her family. Its young people mainly, accumulating outside her door, there have been allegations then that she has been saying there is a male that she doesn't know, knocking on her door and exposing himself to her. And she's only a [pause], excuse me a young lady and obviously she finds it quite frightening…it is happening on a nightly basis as well…she's too afraid to leave her house."
>
> Participant C.

The lady discussed by participant C is experiencing horrific incidents on a nightly basis. The incidents described are an extreme realisation of discrimination and prejudice, which according to Scope (2008) may be a result of a belief that disabled people are inferior to others. The fact that she is afraid to leave her house would suggest that the incidents have left her feeling more disabled, as suggested by Panorama (2010) and violated as suggested by Weiss (1992). It would appear that this lady finds it difficult to cope with being victimised, which would agree with the views of Garafalo and Martin (1993), which manifests itself in her withdrawal, which is a common reaction according to Herek and Berrill (1992) and Weiss (1992). Improved engagement with the police would surely be of benefit to the lady discussed by Participant C, the police would hold local intelligence, or may be able to target patrols, keeping an eye on the area thus possibly preventing future incidents.

Participant C stated that this particular lady had not reported these incidents to the police, may be due to a lack of experience with the police or a fear that the police won't believe her, a familiar reason for the un-reporting of hate crime, according to Scott et al (2009) and Learning Disability Wales (2010). It would be interesting to discover if this lady realised what is happening to her is a hate crime, as it is often the case according to Gerstenfeld (2004) that people with learning difficulties often fail to report crime to the police because of a lack of understanding and knowledge as to what a hate crime is.

Many of the participants provided examples of verbal abuse being shouted through the letterboxes of vulnerable adults, and on occasion items being thrown through letterboxes also.

> "Bonfire night is usually another goodun as well, where they stick firecrackers through their doors. I've seen some members experience that over the years that I've worked here."
>
> Participant D.

Some participants described how adults they support have described threats of violence, sometimes when they are at home. It is horrific to hear that many of the people who are supported by the Participants of these stage one focus groups are living in fear, trapped in their own homes, unable to go out due to feeling unsafe.

> "His neighbour threatened him and shouts abuse at him, his response is to shout abuse and threaten him back. The police then say they will arrest him…he never started it, he's just feeling threatened and doesn't know how else to react."
>
> Participant H.

The gentleman discussed by participant H seemed to be frustrated about getting into trouble himself because he retaliated when a neighbour shouted abuse and threatened him. This is sometimes the case, Mind (2007) agree that some victims of hate crime feel the need to react and take action, resulting as them being perceived as the perpetrator.

These incidents described by the participants were said to be extremely hurtful and upsetting which corroborates claims by The Disability Rights Commission (2007) that such incidents and crime can be uniquely destructive and unsettling for the victim, possibly due to the targeting of the victim because of a core-characteristic of their identity i.e. their difficulty (McLaughlin and Muncie, 2006) and the sheer hostility of the perpetrator (Panorama, 2010). There was general agreement amongst participants that the adults they support experience incidents on a regular basis, which again appears to confirm the statement by The Disability Rights Commission (2007) that nine out of ten people with learning difficulties have experienced hate crime.

> "She told me that the kids call her names every time they see her, bless her. It happens on a nightly basis, she can't leave her house without some abuse."
>
> Participant G.

As discussed, the participants were all in agreement that the adults they provide support have spoken to them regarding their experiences of hate crime. Many times, the support workers were left with the impression that the adults they support did not have awareness that hate crimes/incidents had occurred, something that Gerstenfeld (2004) suggests is a reason for adults with learning difficulties not reporting hate crime to the police. This will be discussed in the next section of this chapter. Increased awareness on the part of the police with regard to the demographics of the community will result in greater understanding of the community members, assisting the police to identify potentially vulnerable people, along with potential perpetrators of such crime. It would also provide opportunities to inform potentially vulnerable people about hate crime and the avenues of reporting and seeking help.

4.3.2 Poor awareness of hate crime

To explore the statement that many participants made regarding adults they support not possessing adequate knowledge of what hate crime is, the support workers were asked to elaborate and describe their experiences. It is hoped that greater understanding of this issue could, in part, explain why there is a significant under-reporting of hate crime as discussed by Kelly (2008), Sharp (2001) and Gillen (2009). Under-reporting unfortunately results in very few cases resulting in a conviction (Gillen, 2009).

> "She didn't realise that what was happening to her was a hate crime. They have lived with bullying and harassment for so many years, they don't realise it's a crime."
>
> Participant H.

> "Some of my members have no idea that the incidents and things they tell me about are actually hate crime, it's so sad to think they just accept it as part of their life"
>
> Participant F.

The participants told the researcher that in their opinion some of their members do not fully understanding what a hate crime is, and perhaps just accept incidents and crime because they

are used to being treated that way. These views would appear to support claims by Gerstenfeld (2004) that a lack of understanding and knowledge regarding hate crime can contribute to a person not reporting crime to the police. A contributory factor in this lack of understanding could be because there is little or no information available to people with regard to hate crime, as claimed by Davies (2010). There does appear to be a real need for improvements in education regarding hate crime. The police could possible work in conjunction with other agencies/organisations with the aim to deliver information and education regarding this phenomenon.

The support workers expressed views that in their opinion it is vitally important to provide sufficient information to adults with learning difficulties so that they will know that incidents of hate crime are wrong, and that they don't have to live with it. The reasons they gave for this provision of information being so important was that the effects of hate crime can be so debilitating and destructive, something that McLaughlin and Muncie (2006) and Panorama (2010) agree with. Participants were asked to discuss the effects of hate crime incidents on the adults they support in an attempt to gain greater understanding.

4.3.3 Effects of hate crime

The participants talked about their experiences with the adults they support, and how incidents of hate crime, whether they are recognised as such or not, can affect the victim and others who are involved with the victim The concept that hate crime can affect other people, not just the victim, is supported by Clement et al (2011).

> "And she's only [pause], excuse me a young lady and obviously she finds it quite frightening...her father comes down and sits in the house with her for some hours and then leaves her."
>
> Participant C.

The experience described by participant C would suggest that the young lady felt more disabled as a result of the incident, resulting in her needing extra support due to her fear. This would support suggestions by Panorama (2010) that victims of hate crime can feel more disabled by hate crime. Furthermore, Garofalo and Martin (1993) suggest victims can find it difficult to cope with being victimised, something that was intimated by participant E who discussed a member who was afraid to go out alone due to fear following a hate crime, such withdrawal is typical of a hate crime victim, according to Herek and Berrill (1992) and Weiss (1992).

> "…he's very scared you know, he finds it difficult to go out alone. It's very debilitating."
>
> Participant E.

Examples were provided that suggest not only the individual who is affected by hate crime incidents, but their families and friends, particularly their peers who also have learning difficulties.

> "Since this has been happening he finds it hard to trust people, his father has told us that that he doesn't know what to do with him."
>
> Participant E.

> "to be honest with you the majority of the group are unsettled by what happened to him, they are afraid the same will happen to them, they don't feel safe…it's so sad to see, you know?"
>
> Participant H.

These examples support suggestions by Clement et al (2011) that friends and peers of victims of hate crime can become afraid and alter the way they live their own lives for fear of falling victim to hate crime themselves, agreeing that hate crime can indeed have an effect on friends, family members and wider implications can affect community cohesion as described by Ilston (2009). If the police make improvements to the engagement process, proactively engaging the potentially vulnerable, and improved how hate crime is dealt with this may have a positive knock-on effect, not only increasing the confidence of the victim, but peers also.

As discussed, another effect on the victim that was described by some participants was the feeling that they would need to retaliate, and the fear that they may, as a consequence, find themselves in trouble with the police accordingly. Participant G describes a time when one of the gentlemen he supports felt retaliation was his only option.

> "He gets very angry about what he's going through, and has often retaliated by making threats. I'm worried he will get himself into trouble with the police and they won't understand that he was being threatened first. He's only acting like that because he is so frightened."
>
> Participant G.

The experience described by participant G agrees with suggestions by Mind (2007) that victims can be viewed as perpetrators themselves if they react and retaliate. As discussed by participant G, the member she supported retaliated in fear and in order to defend himself. Participant G described concerns that if the police had been called, they would not have taken into consideration the events that lead to this gentleman's retaliation, suggesting that the police would not provide an opportunity for the reporting of hate crime incidents that this gentleman had been experiencing. Opportunities for reporting hate crime was another topic that was discussed, Davies (2010) expressed a belief that little or no information is available to this section of our community regarding the reporting of hate crime, this will be explored further in the next section of this chapter.

4.4 Opportunities to report hate crime to the police

In an attempt to understand the opportunities that are available to adults with learning difficulties to report hate crime to the police, participants were asked to discuss their views, and potentially shed some light on why adults with learning difficulties often choose not to report hate crime as suggested by Gerstenfeld (2004). Participants emphasised the importance of their members feeling able and comfortable to approach the police to report crime, yet acknowledged that often their members were able to discuss crime and incidents

within the comfortable setting of their support groups, but were unwilling to take it any further. A number of reasons have been discussed regarding this issue, perhaps a feeling that they won't be believed (Scott et al, 2009; Learning Disability Wales, 2010), or a lack of understanding of their human rights (Berzins et al, 2003; Mind, 2007; Clement et al, 2011).

The views expressed by participants can be encapsulated under eight themes. These were:

- Unwillingness to report crime.
- Coping Mechanisms
- Fear that the police won't believe victim.
- Fear of repercussions if hate crime reported to police.
- Fear of the police.
- Length of investigations.
- Information available to victims.
- Victim's experiences in court.

Each of these themes will be explored in more depth throughout this chapter.

4.4.1 Unwillingness to report crime

Participants expressed varying opinions as to whether the adults they support would feel able to report crimes to the police. Whilst one participant felt that her members would be happy to approach the police to report a crime, the majority were in agreement that, in their opinion, a large proportion of them did not feel able to report crimes to the police, this would support claims by Mencap in 1999 that a mere 17% of participants with learning difficulties in their research into victimisation, harassment, and bullying, would be happy to report crimes committed against them to the police (Sharp, 2001). It should be noted that the area that

Participant F refers to receives regular visits from a hate crime officer, where she gets to know the members, encouraging them to report hate crime through her, therefore the members of her group have developed a good relationship with the police, possibly contributing to their confidence in reporting crime, something that Scott et al (2009) suggest is often lacking in vulnerable adults. Visits such as these from a hate crime officer do not appear to be a force wide strategy, rather the decision of an individual officer. It is unclear if such support would continue in this officer's absence.

> "The people we support here in ****** would feel able to report crimes to the police, we have **** here you see, they get to know her and they all like her. They know that if they come to us we will call ***** and she'll pop in."
>
> Participant F.

The 'good practice' described by Participant F goes some way to fulfilling the obligation placed upon the police by the Crime and Disorder Act (1998) as discussed by Crawford et al (2005) and the Home Office (2004). This engagement seems to be working in this area, as participant F describes confidence that the members she supports would feel able to report crime to the hate crime officer.

However, disappointingly this good practice is not evident in other areas across South Wales. Participant E suggests the members of her group would not be happy and comfortable to approach the police to report hate crime as they do not know the police well enough.

> "A lot of the members of this group aren't happy to go to the police to report things, I don't know what it is like in other areas, but here they just don't know the police well enough."
>
> Participant E.

Effective engagement is fundamental to the delivery of community policing as instructed by the Home Office (2004) if the police are to determine the needs and priorities of all community members. It would appear the engagement with these vulnerable adults in this area falls short of what is required of the police.

The majority of participants agreed that the members they support would not feel able to report crime to the police, describing a variety of methods in which the adults they support develop ways in which to cope rather than reporting hate crime to the police, these are discussed in greater detail below.

4.4.2 Coping Mechanisms

Participants discussed ways in which the adults they support cope with crime and incidents, rather than reporting to the police. There was general agreement amongst participants that their members will try to ignore it, accept that this is the way their life will be or try to adapt the way they live their lives in order to avoid future incidents, which corroborates suggestions by Scope (2008) that some victims ignore incidents of hate crime, accepting them as the norm, and part of their everyday life. For example, participant A described how one of her members who has adapted how he lives his life in order to cope with the incidents that were occurring on public transport. He will not use the bus anymore because of incidents of verbal abuse by school children, opting instead to walk to town.

> "He's determined that it won't affect his day to day life, but he still won't catch the bus. He has changed his routine. He walks all the way to town now so he doesn't see the kids on the bus, and he's not integrating with them then. It's not right, is it? He should be able to catch the bus, like everyone else."
>
> Participant A.

Additional perceptions were expressed, suggesting that adults with learning difficulties have faced prejudice, bullying and harassment throughout their childhood and experiences of hate crime are to be expected throughout adulthood as a natural progression, and as such, they accept that as their norm. This is something that Scope (2008) suggests is common with victims of hate crime as they have often grown up with frequently unchallenged harassment,

and subsequently accept such behaviour as part of everyday life. It would appear that this section of the community is routinely let down from an early age. It is unacceptable that this is unchallenged.

> "I think people just accept it as the norm, they are so used to throughout their lives being called names and being bullied or whatever so it's just a natural progression that they will be picked on out there….so they just get on with it, and accept it unfortunately. We try and educate our members that no, it isn't right, you know when these things happen, it could even be a hate crime, you know, it can be as severe as that but because they have always grown up with it, it is just normal and they accept it. It is sad".
>
> Participant A.

Examples were discussed where participants have witnessed adults they support moving away from the area where they have experienced issues as a way of dealing with the problem.

> "He was so distressed about the constant harassment that he asked to move from the area. It's so sad that someone should have to move to get away from small-minded idiots."
>
> Participant E.

Sadly, this is a common misconception that moving will solve the problem of the harassment vulnerable adults are experiencing. Berzins et al (2005) suggest that often these victims are left feeling exasperated when the victimisation, hate crime, and harassment continue in the new area.

The participants generally agreed that victims of hate crime that they support would generally prefer to find ways to cope with incidents, for a variety of reasons, which have been explored in the next section of this chapter.

4.4.3 Fear that the police won't believe victim

Participants intimated that in their experience, there is a general feeling that many of their members would not feel able to report crime to the police for fear that the police would not believe them as illustrated below. Participant A states that some of the adults she has

supported have reported crime to the police, but apparently the police did not believe the person. This experience has since put this particular member off reporting crime in the future, supporting claims by Scott et al (2009) and Learning Disability Wales (2010) that fear of not being believed by the police and a general lack of confidence in the police prevents reporting. There is a legal obligation on police to recognise hate crime under equality legislation as discussed by Giannasi (2010). It is vitally important that the police are able to identify a hate crime as Ilston (2009) suggest that if hate crimes are not dealt with effectively they can escalate in severity. It is likely that this person's experience will deter others who are experiencing problems/issues from approaching the police. For this reason the police need to proactively engage this section of the community in order to increase levels of confidence.

> "A lot of time they don't think they will be believed, and other times they have actually reported things and they haven't been believed. The general feeling is then what's the point?"
>
> Participant A.

Other support workers agreed that they have experienced supporting an adult with learning difficulties at a time when they have not been believed by the police, preventing them from trusting the police with their experiences in the future. These experiences possibly reinforce the fear that attitudinal barriers exist within the police environment, as the adults with learning difficulties who report crime to the police and feel that they are not believed will assume the police organisation is not concerned with their needs and willingly marginalise them, something that is suggested by Strange and Banning (2001). It is tragic that this section of the community appear to believe that they are not important or worthy of police time.

One support worker provided a specific example of an incident where the a couple of adults she supports described a specific occasion where they had called the police, but felt that they

had not been taken seriously because of their learning difficulties. Participant F described them as being completely disillusioned by the police.

> "Do you remember the married couple who both have learning difficulties in the ****** area? They were burgled and when the police came they refused to believe them, saying it was a domestic and that they had made the burglary up."
>
> Participant F.

The couple that participant F discussed were said to be reluctant to call the police in the future as they had not been believed by the police on the occasion described. This encounter may have been quite destructive to their relationship with the police. The first encounter with the police in this instance had truly shaped this couple's opinion of the police. It was far from positive, and they are unlikely to seek help in the future.

Participants discussed an opinion that their members are indeed likely to be put off reporting crime or incidents if they don't believe the police will do anything or advise the victim to ignore the problem.

> "The general feeling is 'what's the point?' They think they told them last time and they didn't do anything about it. They won't believe me in the future".
>
> Participant A.

> "Do you remember ****?, he told the police about the kids knocking his door all the time, they just told him to ignore them and they will go away, they just didn't seem to want to be bothered with it."
>
> Participant G.

There was a general agreement amongst participants that this feeling or view that the police won't do anything to help adults with learning difficulties can spread throughout the entire group and influence other member's perceptions of the police.

4.4.4 Fear of repercussions if hate crime was reported to police

Members of the focus group raised another reason that can prevent the adults with learning difficulties they support from reporting crime to the police, this is a fear of repercussions, corroborating claims by Kelly (2008) that this socially isolated section of our community fear repercussions if they report crime. The suggestion was that these vulnerable victims may fear repercussions from the perpetrator if they discover that the crime or incident has been reported to the police. These victims of hate crime need to have confidence that the police will act upon what they are telling them and that the police will assist and protect them.

> "When it is just a simple case of going in and reporting that there are people hanging around their back door every night. You know, it's not just about a fear of the police it's sometimes a fear of what happens by reporting something to the police".
>
> Participant A.

Other participants describe a fear that there may be other repercussions if a crime is reported to the police, perhaps other agencies will be involved who may conclude that the victim is not able to look after themselves. To the victim there are possibly terrifying consequences if other agencies perceive that they cannot cope.

> "You know, I'm trying to ask her why then? Why aren't you contacting the police? She doesn't want to draw attention to herself, you know? She doesn't want them to involve her Social Worker. She doesn't want that."
>
> Participant C.

Examples were also provided where adults with learning difficulties have expressed fear over what the police may do to them as a result of reporting a crime. A fear that they too may get into trouble. Fears such as this could be laid to rest if good quality engagement frequently took place as this section of the community could develop trust in the police, something that Pickering et al (2008) believe is the primary aim of community engagement.

> "He's afraid of what the police will do to him. No matter what we say, he won't believe that they will help him. He would rather put up with it."
>
> Participant G.

Participant G described a fear that one of her members has of fear of what the police will do to him. There was a general agreement amongst participants that many of the adults they support have a fear of the police, reasons for this will be explained in the next section of the chapter.

4.4.5 Fear of the police

It is suggested by Trojanowicz et al (2000) that some members of the community, often the members who are potentially more vulnerable and hard to reach, view the police as uniformed strangers who will hurt them rather than help them. Many of the participants agree with this, stating that their members have a fear of the police, and the police uniform.

The fear that the participants describe may, in part, explain why many hate crimes go un-reported. Participant H suggests this fear is ingrained in people and possibly handed down through generations.

> "Some of them mind can be a bit frightened of the police, it depends how they have been brought up I suppose, you know, [pause] a lad that we have worked with up in ****** and I've been working with him for years and over that period, well we don't know, god forbid, if something did happen that he needed to report to the police that he would actually get over his background as a child, you know, it has taken years really to get him over the fear of the uniform and stuff like that. Literally he would see a uniform and he would automatically think, whether he was just walking in the street you know, he would cross the road, he's got a real deep fear of the police, so you know I think it's basically his background, as he has been brought up, you know?"
>
> Participant H.

Participant C agreed that some of the members she supports are afraid of the police, and the whole family share this fear, it would appear this fear can be inherent. It would appear in this case that no positive engagement had ever taken place between the police and the person in question. It is possible that proactive engagement from a police officer out of uniform would assist in breaking down this barrier.

> "I gave her the hate crime leaflet and told her to report it but I don't think she is too keen to do that, or the family, they are frightened of the police. So we are just working with her to try and encourage her to contact the police station".
>
> Participant C.

Examples were provided where it was felt that adults with learning difficulties have had their opinions and perceptions of the police influenced by the media. Television programmes are often the only experience of the police that this section of the community will have, and these are often very dramatic in nature, which can cause these adults to be fearful. Positive engagement and relationship building would go some way towards enabling adults with learning difficulties to see a softer side of policing, which is equally as important as the harder 'law enforcement' image often portrayed on the television.

> "He watches TV programmes, you know where the police are followed by cameras, he's afraid that the police will arrest him for saying or doing the wrong thing."
>
> Participant F.

Some participants suggested that some of their members have expressed fear of the police uniform, suggesting this is a significant factor in the fear expressed by some of the adults they support. Vadackumchery (2000) holds a belief that the police uniform has the ability to encourage the police officer to become human rights unfriendly, and whether consciously or unconsciously they assume a particular ego, which causes them to act as an authoritarian figure which could be too unfriendly and uninviting to adults with learning difficulties, something that Miller and Hess (2007) agree with.

> "I'd arranged to meet **** by the Christmas tree in town to do his shopping, he must have seen me chatting to a police officer because he disappeared all day. We were so worried about him, and when we found him he said he'd been frightened when he saw the police officer so he went somewhere to hide. A totally irrational fear, as he has never had any contact with the police before. He said he is afraid of the police uniform, he doesn't like it at all"
>
> Participant H.

The good practice discussed earlier involves regular contact (out of uniform), which allows the members of that particular group to get to know the officer, in a friendly atmosphere, the

gentleman discussed by Participant H may benefit from some time to get to know a local police officer.

4.4.6 Length of investigations

Another issue some of the participants felt important to raise was the length of time it takes to investigate an incident or crime once it had been reported. This is something that they felt is preventing adults with learning difficulties reporting incidents to the police. It is acknowledged by the CPS (2014) that a police investigation can take a long time, it is often many months before a victim hears anything about the case, however, all of the participants believed that in the case of a person with learning difficulties the length of investigation is perhaps more of an issue than it would be for a member of the general public due to their ability to retain information.

> "Why is it that sometimes then these investigations, when people do report things, take so long? Because this is another issue, the length of time that it takes, and then people then won't go and report again because they felt it took so long the first time and then at the end then they can't use them because they are not considered a credible witness because they can't remember, they have got learning disabilities. Do you know what I mean? It's been going on so long".
>
> Participant A.

> "And their retention of information, huge chunks of that information may not be retained and then once you start talking bits of that can be taken away, that's not because it's a lie, it's because of the learning disability, they absorb that information and then it gets relayed back, so it is difficult for a person with learning disabilities, it's about communication and using pictures and prompts, then other than an unreliable witness find ways to find that information."
>
> Participant C.

Participants A and C highlight an important issue that may prevent adults with learning difficulties from reporting crime to the police. The members that they discussed couldn't remember the exact details of the offences by the time the cases were heard in court due to their learning difficulty. Gillen (2009) states that of the few cases that reach court, very few

result in conviction, this could, in part, be explained by the experiences of participants A and C. Stone (2008) agrees that a vulnerable adult's inability to cope with questioning during a court case can result in them being branded an unreliable witness, adding that equal access to the criminal justice system is essential. The use of special measures introduced in the Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999 (Home Office, 2002; Grant et al, 2010) would facilitate the giving of evidence in court by a vulnerable person, it would appear that such measures were not utilised in the cases described by participant A and C. If these victims had been able to provide video recorded evidence, which would have been recorded at the time of the reporting of the offences, and their accounts of the crimes would have been clearer to the court.

4.4.7 Information available to victims

The lack of information provided to a victim by the police once a crime has been reported regarding the subsequent investigation was raised by some participants, who felt there was a shortage of information available to their members. If a person is not kept informed then surely they are less likely to have confidence in the police, and less likely to report any further problems.

> "And then, there is the other thing then, when it has been reported, they bring in the Vulnerable Adults team, erm, what happens after that, people are left hanging for a long time, they never really know the outcome. Nobody tells them anything…nobody comes back to them with information."
>
> Participant B.

> "She reported a horrific incident, and the police did investigate it. It took a few years and do you know, they never really kept her up to date with what was going on, she wasn't given any support at all. That was horrid for her, she felt like she didn't matter at all."
>
> Participant H.

The accounts of participant B and H were generally agreed with by the other participants, it was generally felt that very little information is provided to the adults they support if they

report crime to the police. The Ministry of Justice (2013) states that victims of crime will be kept informed of progress in the police investigation, particularly if a suspect is being questioned, arrested or charged, and any conditions that are in place if the suspect is bailed. The offer of victim support should also be made to all victims, however, it would appear that the lady being discussed by participant H did not receive any information about further support.

4.4.8 Victim's experiences in court

The experiences described by some of the participants who have supported members through court appearances are discussed below.

> "And I think when people have been involved in situations and have gone to court and they have been ripped apart, they have been told they are not credible witnesses, I sat in on a court case once, there was a lot of abuse going on at the time and [pause], they were fetching things up, trying to discredit the person and fetching things up that had no relevance to the case and I kept thinking, you know, they are bringing her life into this and what has it got to do with what's actually going on. So they got away with it, and that word gets out then and people won't report it then, they are afraid that it could go to court and I'll have to stand up in court and what are they going to say to me and what am I going to be asked and it's just horrendous."
>
> Participant A.

Participant A raised grave concerns regarding the experience of one member during a court case. It would appear that the member she was talking about was indeed at a disadvantage because of her learning difficulties and vulnerabilities. It must be noted that the specifics of this experience were not discussed during the focus group. It is unclear as to whether special measures were utilised. If they had been it may have provided a more appropriate, safer environment in which the person in question could give evidence.

> "I know there was one incidence and there was a physical abuse case going on and erm, a young woman went to court and they fetched up things, they called her

> a liar in the court and they fetched up that she was stealing money, they said, and it turns out she wasn't stealing money, it was her own anyway, so, you know, it doesn't make sense then to people to want to report if that's what could happen to them, so then they don't feel they are believed and it was a horrendous time that was."
>
> Participant D.

> "She was so frightened to just be in that environment, let alone seeing the scum bag who attacked her, how could they put her through that? I don't understand how they can't recognise how vulnerable these people are, you know, and help them to get justice."
>
> Participant H.

The experiences discussed by participants would suggest that on these occasions the special measures available to vulnerable adults who have to give evidence in court were not utilised. The use of special measures, outlined in the Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999 (Home Office, 2002), such as an intermediary, communication aids, evidence via a live-link, screens around the witness box or evidence given in private in order to allow the victims to give evidence in most comfortable way were not taken advantage of. It would be interesting to discover whether special measures are routinely utilised, or whether there is a general lack of use. The experiences of vulnerable people in court undoubtedly have an effect on the number of convictions and possible the amount of crime reports.

4.5 Interpretations of further support available to victims

Participants were asked about their knowledge and understanding regarding the involvement of other agencies, and further support that is available to victims of hate crime. The results of this questioning topic fall into two categories, outlined below:

- Provision of victim support.
- Support from Social Worker.

4.5.1 Provision of victim support

The participants discussed the role of victim support as being particularly important to adults with learning difficulties because of their potentially increased vulnerabilities. The majority of participants expressed concerns regarding the provision of victim support. There appear to be inconsistencies in the provision of this vital support.

> "There is one case at the moment, a member was attacked and I asked her and I said what about victim support and she said she hadn't been offered anything. I hear then that victim support got involved because someone has had their coat nicked on the bus. You know, it just doesn't make sense. But then again whether that's down to police misconception that their care manager should overtake that, or leave it to social services and leave it under their umbrella. I don't know what the police's ideas are around that or what their training is…perhaps it would be better for every agency to offer it?"
>
> Participant D.

The provision of support to a victim is reliant on somebody making a referral to Victim Support, although the victim themselves can self-refer. The Ministry of Justice in their 'Code of Practice for Victims of Crime' (2013) state that the police should offer every victim of crime a referral to an organisation who can offer support to a victim. This doesn't appear to be routinely happening, as the majority of participants expressed their concerns regarding a lack of referrals, which is shocking and disappointing given the potential vulnerabilities. If routine referrals to Victim Support were made to these vulnerable victims of crime a Victim Care Officer would be able to determine the most appropriate level of support that each individual requires, putting together a bespoke 'help plan'. The support could take shape in the form of practical help, emotional support or the provision of information through telephone conversations, or face-to-face visits, working with other organisations as necessary. Support in the form of a witness service can also be offered, which would be invaluable to a vulnerable adult who is facing giving evidence in court (Victim Support, 2014). Referrals of vulnerable adults following an offence to Victim Support are vital, the issue we face is that very few cases are reported to the police, as discussed by Gillen (2009), so other agencies

such as Social Services, organisations, family members, friends need to be aware and able to refer victims of crime themselves.

4.5.2 Support from Social Worker

The role of Social Workers emerged frequently during the focus groups. Participants described situations where members feel happy and comfortable to report crimes/incidents to their social worker, whereas other members do not under any circumstances want to involve their social worker for fear of repercussions if the social workers deem them unable to cope.

> "Oh the police just phone the social worker, you know I mean, a lot of people don't like their social workers and they don't want them involved. Social workers are not the be all and end all you know. The bureaucracy involved for someone just to go in and report that kids are running around their back door all the time when they are frightened. You know and there are a whole lot of other people then that are involved, you know what I mean, they don't always want them involved in their lives. When it is just a simple case of going in and reporting that there are people hanging around their back door every night. You know, it's not just about a fear of the police it's sometimes a fear of what happens by reporting something to the police."
>
> Participant A.

It is worth noting the participants did not provide any positive accounts of social worker involvement with their members who were going through the criminal justice system.

4.6 Evaluation of the engagement process between the police and adults with learning difficulties and recommendations for improvements in this process

As the participants work closely with adults who have learning difficulties, their opinion was sought as to how the police could improve the engagement process between the police and this section of our community. The views expressed can be encompassed in three themes. There were:

- Proactive, positive steps towards engagement.
- Improvements to police training.
- Improved liaison with partner agencies.

4.6.1 Proactive, positive steps towards engagement

There was a general view discussed by participants that the police need to proactively get to know these potentially vulnerable members of communities in order to identify their needs and vulnerabilities. This is just not a romantic ideology, but an obligation and requirement placed upon them to engage all members of the community in order to enable the police to set policing priorities that meet the needs of communities by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (Home Office, 2004). Whilst it is acknowledged that ever-decreasing police resources will make meaningful engagement a little more challenging, nonetheless it is still extremely important. The utilisation of PCSO and volunteers in a 'Big Society' approach must be explored.

> "It used to be lovely to see the police pop in and have a cuppa with the members here, it was a good way for them to get to know everyone and I guess it gave them experience in how to deal with learning difficulties. It can be difficult at first, but the more you surround yourself with something, the easier it gets. Not all people with learning difficulties are the same. If they took time to get to know them, they would see that."
>
> Participant G.

Participant G raised a valid point that the communities the police serve are not all the same, they are heterogeneous. Crawford et al (2005) believes some of the community can be 'hard to reach' and therefore may not benefit from interaction from the police, however, participant G explains that a simple, regular visit to her group for a cup of coffee went a long way to improving the relationship, when such visits took place in the past. The benefits were not only felt by the members of her group who were getting to know a police officer, but the

police officer also benefitted from regular interaction with people with learning difficulties, taking time to get used to how different the needs and difficulties of individuals can be.

> "It's also when they get, you know, when they are asked questions, it doesn't mean they were a victim of a crime, it could be that they were a witness to a crime, members have said they don't ask me if I saw it, they asked my carer or my mother."
>
> Participant C.

> "They used to come, PCSO's they used to pop in for a cuppa but not for a long time."
>
> Participant D.

> "The police haven't called in here to see the members for a long time…and the police station is just up the road."
>
> Participant A.

The majority of participants expressed their belief that there are barriers between the police and this section of our community. Not speaking directly to an adult with a learning difficulty but to their carer could be the result of an attitudinal barrier, and a belief that the person with the difficulty is unable to do certain things, as discussed by Walmsley (2010). If it is believed that a lack of engagement with this section of the community is due to the police failing to organise appropriately, and meet the needs of a section of the community, then this is evidence of an institutional barrier, the police according to Nichols and Quaye (2008) who also suggest this barrier can be removed once the police address the needs and improve the service they offer this section of the community. There appeared to be a general agreement amongst all participants that whilst it can be difficult to engage with adults with learning difficulties that the police need to be more proactive, and take positive steps towards breaking down the barriers.

> "In this area our members have got contact in a local garden centre, PCSOs come in and out and erm, and if somebody reports something to me we can go through PC ******."
>
> Participant D.

Participant D describes an area of good practice, where a PCSO from South Wales Police regularly visits the members of a particular group in order to get to know the members and

possibly identify their specific needs. Participant F also describes similar good practice, where a hate crime officer visits the group on a monthly basis.

> "There is some good work going on here in ******. We have a hate crime officer come and meet with the group every month or so. She doesn't wear her uniform, she just comes along in her own clothes and has a coffee with the members. It's good you know, because she is getting to know them and they are getting to know her. She encourages them to report incidents through her, and has left us with forms that we can fill in for our members, and her direct contact number. It is going a long way to helping our members."
>
> Participant F.

> "I think it went a long way when they started coming and visiting and just coming and having a cup of tea, not coming in formally, you know because it's more difficult I suppose in other areas, I can only speak for **** area, they just sit and have a cup of tea and have a chat, especially in the garden centre, because it's an open area anyway, you know, I think it's just breaking down that barrier and becoming more familiar with people and I think it's a hard task really, but I know it did go some way in breaking down that barrier, coming in and having a cup of tea and a laugh and a joke, but of course there are quite a few areas that the police just wouldn't have access to, would they? like the Day Centre".
>
> Participant D.

Evidence of such good practice was not apparent across the entire area of South Wales. One participant described such practice occurring in the past but not any longer. All participants felt that such interaction and engagement was much needed across South Wales. All participants expressed the positive benefits this would bring to their members. Once again it is acknowledged that resources are diminished. However, lateral, intelligent thinking along with effective partnership working will equate to proactive engagement becoming a reality.

> "We never see any police officers, or PCSO's and the police station is only up the road. And our members want to feel important to the police, you know? They want to be included and valued"
>
> Participant A.

> "I wish we could get someone calling in to us, I think it would help."
>
> Participant B.

Participant A expressed the feelings of her members who want to feel valued and included by the police. This may require a change of perspective of how disability is viewed. It could be suggested that currently the police display a degree of the medical model/view of disability where adults with learning difficulties are viewed as in need of care, excluding them from engagement because there appears to be a professional dominance, the professionals (police) are in control of the engagement process. The control of engagement appears to be with the police, if they chose not to actively engage, then this section of the community remains marginalised (The Open University, 2006). Organisations that work with disabled people believe in the social model of disability, which requires the re-structuring of society and social change in order to help remove the attitudes and barriers that can make them feel more disabled (Centre for Inclusive Learning Support, 2012). The police need to remove attitudinal barriers, and explore how they organise themselves in order to allow adults with learning difficulties equal opportunities to engage, minimising the risk of them becoming marginalised and vulnerable.

The re-structuring of the police organisation would perhaps begin with improvements to police training in relation to disability and adults with learning difficulties.

4.6.2 Improvements to police training

Participants generally agreed that the police need to improve their communication techniques with adults who have learning difficulties. It is acknowledged that adults with severe, profound or multiple learning difficulties may be more difficult to communicate with, and involving relatives or carers may be advisable (Mansell, 2010), however, adults with mild learning difficulties, should be able to communicate effectively with the police, providing the communication is appropriate to their needs (University of Sheffield, 2013). An example of appropriate communication would be the use of ‘picture banks’, which are produced by an

organisation called CHANGE, when producing information leaflets/sheets. The use of simple and easy to understand pictures should make information accessible to adults with learning difficulties (CHANGE, 2013).

> "I mean this is what I'm saying about the communication side of it, even if it was someone going in with a learning disability to report a crime that they have witnessed that has not generally you know, happened to them, they can easily get hold of interpreters for others but there is nothing then for people with a learning disability that could have a communication problem. If somebody went in they could have a communication barrier and they might not even bother going in because they know they are going to struggle to try to communicate it over anyway. And that was something that was brought up quite a few times, trying to educate the police on how best to deal with them. Often they say 'Oh we'll just phone the social worker'."
>
> Participant F.

> "They need to take time to get to know the person they are dealing with, the needs and communication skills will be different with each person, take time, talk to them and listen, that's what they need to do."
>
> Participant H.

Examples were given where the actions taken by police were detrimental to future relationships with this section of the community. Participant H, below, describes an incident when a lack of communication lead to an extremely negative experience for one of her members.

> "One of our gentlemen was walking through town one night when a police van pulled over, they didn't stop to ask any questions, they just bundled him into the back of the van and took him to the station where they left him in a cell. They didn't realise that he wasn't drunk and disorderly, he has learning difficulties and disabilities. He was so upset by it, he has no faith in the police at all."
>
> Participant H.

Incidents such as these, cause the majority of participants to agree that an improvement to the training of police officers to assist them to recognise learning difficulties in the first instance is needed. If the police can understand how best to engage a person who has learning difficulties we could see significant improvements to the engagement process. This concurs with claims by Gillen (2009) and Burton et al (2006) that insufficient numbers of police

officers receive the necessary specialist training to enable them to recognise an adult with learning difficulties and provide the most appropriate level of support. In some forces it is claimed that less than 1% of police officers receive this vital training, this could be viewed as an organisational barrier because the police are failing to organise itself effectively, which further marginalises this section of the community (Gillen, 2009; Burton et al, 2006). Mencap (2012a) suggest that as learning difficulties vary considerably, they can be difficult to recognise.

> "It is suggested that police training on how to recognise a person with learning difficulties is poor. Some people haven't got obvious difficulties, it is not visible, when you look at them. Do you think the training of police officers can be improved?"
>
> Participant D.

Some participants felt that in order for vulnerable adults who have learning difficulties to be able to freely access the criminal justice system improvements are necessary. If the process of accessing help is complicated and difficult then potentially vulnerable people will be less likely to seek assistance.

> "Reporting a crime can be a difficult process, we had an incident here a couple of years back and I was the one that phoned. But I couldn't report it to ****** police station by here I had to phone ******* headquarters and you know, I spent my whole morning and it was 3-4 days before somebody came to look to see if we had had a break-in. And then I was told who are you to say that it was a suspected break-in in the first place, I wasn't to make that judgement. If it was someone with learning difficulties at the end of that phone, it could be their house. The person at the end of the phone wasn't particularly very…you know it just seems mad that you've got a police station at the end of the road, I could have walked over, or one of our members could have walked over."
>
> Participant A.

The majority of the participants discussed the attitude of the police and their belief that this is also, in part, due to a lack of knowledge regarding learning difficulties and poor provision of training.

> "I think it's a lot to do with the attitudes, I know that we have done a lot of work I know that nine times out of ten they are great but I mean we have been there sometimes and there are certain police officers and they haven't even

> acknowledged our members, they have completely blanked them, ignored us completely. It makes our members feel… Reinforces their fears."
>
> Participant A.

Participant A highlights how important it is for a police officer to be able to engage with adults with learning difficulties. If they are unable to do so, they are compounding the problem, marginalising and reinforcing the fears of the vulnerable members of the community that they should be trying to help.

> "They put the hat on and sometimes turn into a completely different being, I know that I recently had a car accident in December and the other person involved wanted the police there and he got out of the car right, and he said, why am I here? You know, he was so abrupt, you can imagine now, it was quite intimidating for me because I hadn't been involved in a situation like that before, imagine if that was somebody with a learning disability, they'd shit their pants, wouldn't they? Do you know what I mean, I'm not being crude here, you know, and they wonder why they don't want to report things. That is the image that is being portrayed of the police. It's completely negative."
>
> Participant A.

Examples were given where members of groups who have learning difficulties have provided their services during diversity training with South Wales Police, and the support workers who accompanied them experienced a sense that the police did not feel this is important. It is believed that such training is needed so that police officers can feel more confident when dealing with adults who have learning difficulties. It could be the case that police officers who have not received adequate training will fear dealing with a person who has a learning difficulty. Without sufficient knowledge and training, and time taken to get to know members of the community, this may be daunting.

> "We have been involved in a lot of police diversity training where sometimes the older police men or women who have been in the service for so long and who are institutionalised, and erm, they have been sent there and you can tell by their body language, they don't want to be there, you know, and they don't really want to take on board and am I wasting my time being here?"
>
> Participant C.

Some participants expressed frustration that their members are allegedly actively attempting to assist South Wales Police with disability awareness training which would provide the police with an opportunity to hear first-hand what these members of their community needs and wants from them, but this assistance is declined.

> "Disability Awareness wanted to deliver free training to South Wales Police, they didn't want it, saying they had their own training. I mean, this is delivered by people with disability. Why wouldn't they want the training? No awareness."
>
> Participant F.

Furthermore, it is suggested that disability awareness training is better delivered by people who have learning difficulties, there is no better person to convey the needs and wants of an individual then the person themselves. Proactive involvement of adults with learning difficulties in this training would be an excellent indication that attitudinal and organisational barriers are being broken down.

4.6.3 Improved liaison with partner agencies

The importance of agencies liaising and sharing information was discussed and introduced by some participants.

> "We are involved with one case, where one of our members has reported an assault to the police. She's not sure if she's been referred to Victim Support or anything. She doesn't know whether the police have done it, or whether social services have. I'm not sure whether I should call them. There doesn't seem to be any working together, things will get missed. I don't want her to slip through the net and not receive the help she needs."
>
> Participant H.

Participant H discusses an important issue that can only really be addressed by effective information sharing, it would appear that this vulnerable victim had not received any support following the reporting of a crime, which corroborates the statement by Giannasi (2010) that better relationships with partner agencies will facilitate information sharing, something that is

necessary so that vulnerable victims can be identified. Leicestershire Police Constabulary has acknowledged that relationship between the police, council and social services had not been good, and there is a need for effective information sharing also in light of the Fiona Pilkington case. It must also be taken into consideration the level of calls that police service receive on a day to day basis, and with a diminishing front line police service (Innes 2009), the task of reacting to every call becomes increasingly more difficult. A further reason it would seem for an improved working relationship between agencies and possibly an area that could be bridged by the 'Big Society' approach, seeing volunteers liaising with partner agencies perhaps in an attempt to capture vulnerable victims and direct resources.

Participant H describes a victim of crime who has possibly slipped through the net. There needs to be a more robust strategy in place to ensure the vulnerable are identified, crimes committed against them are recorded accurately and links made between incidents.

> "She reported the incident to the police and the police didn't really seem interested. I think they need to pay more attention to these vulnerable people, then perhaps they will recognise vulnerabilities and when they should be doing something. If they communicated with other agencies then maybe they would identify the vulnerable members of our communities before anything bad happens. You know, they could contact social services or the GP, couldn't they?"
>
> Participant E.

Failing to refer a vulnerable person to Victim Support or another agency is unacceptable. It is imperative that an assessment of the victim's needs is made as soon as possible so that appropriate support can be given, particularly when the victim is considered vulnerable.

4.7 Photo Elicitation

The next stage in the focus groups was to show the photographs that the researcher intended to use during subsequent focus groups. Participants were invited to give their opinions on

each photograph. Table 12 shows the order in which they were shown. The photographs used can be found in Appendix E.

Table 12: List of Photographs

Photograph	
1.Two male patrol officers	Appendix E(a)
2.Male patrol officer during royal visit	Appendix E(b)
3.Two female mounted officers	Appendix E(c)
4.Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) engaging with pensioner	Appendix E(d)
5.Male police officer with police dog	Appendix E(e)
6.Riot officer with police dog	Appendix E(f)
7.Police officers in riot gear	Appendix E(g)
8.Police officers in riot gear and football fans	Appendix E(h)
9.Riot	Appendix E(i)

The participants were in agreement that all of the photographs were appropriate for use during the focus groups with adults with learning difficulties. It was felt that the increasingly popular use of photographs in order to elicit information and facilitate discussion would be interesting, an opinion shared with Rosenblum (1997). The participants felt that some of the members of 'People First' who would take part in the forthcoming focus groups would find them useful as they would take some of the focus away them, and provide some focal point, something that Prosser and Burke (2006) suggest is helpful in making participants feel more comfortable. The support workers also believed that the photographs may provide some insight into why many of the adults they support feel afraid of the police.

Chapter Five

The Process and Findings

Stage Two of the Study

Understanding the Experiences of Adults with Learning Difficulties within the South Wales Area.

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides some discussion regarding the results and the process of data collection during stage two of the study. Stage one of the study, as discussed previously consisted of focus groups with professionals who work with adults who have learning difficulties. Stage two of the study consisted of focus groups with adults who have learning difficulties from across South Wales. Issues that were identified through the literature review, that were discussed with the professionals during stage one of the process were now, during this stage, discussed with adults with learning difficulties in order to gain some understanding of how they perceive the issues. Hesse-Biber et al (2004, cited in Liamputtong, 2007) suggest significant insight into the issues faced by oppressed people can be gleaned by involving them in the research process. People with learning difficulties often find themselves marginalised in society (Riddell et al, 2001). This study very much wanted to promote the inclusion of adults with learning difficulties in the research process, in spite of challenges that are associated with this (Brewster, 2004). Manning (2010) suggested that creating an environment of understanding, mutual respect and trust would enable the participation of this potentially vulnerable section of the community.

The inclusion of potentially vulnerable members of the community inevitably brought with it some ethical considerations. Researchers are advised to be particularly cautious when a study involves 'vulnerable' adults (Hannigan and Allen, 2003), however, with careful consideration participants with learning difficulties are able to gain a positive experience from their participation (Boxall, 2011). Four main areas were given thought in order to ensure this research study was carried out ethically. These included ensuring no harm came to participants, that all participants were able to provide informed consent, there should be no invasion of privacy and the participants should not be deceived in any way (Diener and Crandall, 1978).

Professionals during stage one of the process, acting as champions to the research and 'gatekeepers' to the process facilitated the recruitment of participants for the second stage of focus groups, whilst ensuring the protection of all involved throughout the course of the study.

5.2 Findings from Stage Two

As discussed, the aim of the second stage of the research was to engage with adults who have learning difficulties within South Wales. It was hoped that through this engagement the researcher would discover information regarding the issues that participants of the research face along with some understanding of their relationship with the police. The researcher felt it was important to discover the views, feelings, perceptions and opinions surrounding this phenomenon from adults in the area who have learning difficulties as they are the only people who can provide such testament.

The data was collected from 64 participants who took part in eight focus groups, which were carried out in various locations in South Wales. Participants were invited to take part from different areas to enable the researcher to gather rich, qualitative data from a wide source and to enable the researcher to compare practices across the different areas within the South Wales Police Service area.

The participants who were invited to take part are all members of the 'People First' organisation across South Wales, who regularly attend meetings in their own localities.

The first part of the focus group process involved the researcher asking questions which were informed by the literature review along with results of the stage one focus groups with support workers. The questions focussed on the three important issues that emerged as a result of these reviews. Firstly, adults with learning difficulties are more likely to experience crime and disability hate crime repeatedly. Secondly, these crimes and incidents are less likely to be reported to the police. And thirdly, of the crimes that are reported to the police, few make it to court, of which, few result in a conviction. It was hoped that the participants in this stage of focus groups would be able to provide significant insight into the issues they face, their experiences with the police and whether they would feel comfortable and able to approach the police if they needed to.

The questions asked during the focus groups were structured by the use of a topic guide (See Appendix G). This topic guide along with providing some structure to the focus groups focussed and facilitated discussion between the participants.

The second part of the focus groups involved the researcher showing participants a series of photographs (see Appendix E), a method of data collection that is suggested to be effective in eliciting conversation, and encouraging comments and opinions regarding a particular subject (Banks, 2007).

The researcher began each focus group in a similar manner to the focus groups held during stage one. It was important to ensure that the participants fully understood their role within the research. The researcher gave information about herself, her background and why she was carrying out the research. It was particularly important to ensure that these potentially vulnerable research participants fully understood the process. The topic of confidentiality and how the information was going to be used was reiterated at this point also.

The researcher discussed ground rules that were to be adhered to during the course of the focus group, such as respecting the views of others, one person to speak at a time, and the importance of the participants being non-judgemental. Each focus group lasted two hours, focusing on key areas. Table 13 provides an overview of the questioning topics along with the themes that arose from each topic, see Appendix G for the question guide.

Table 13: Stage Two Focus Group Questioning Topics and Key Themes that Emerged.

Questioning Topic	Key Emerging Themes
1. Experiences of the police.	1. Experiences of engagement with the police. 2. Engagement with female police officer preferred. 3. Fear of the police.
2. Evaluation of current engagement with the police.	1. Positive feelings towards engagement with the police. 2. Areas of good practice.
3. Interpretations of hate crime.	1. Knowledge of hate crime. 2. Experience of hate crime 3. Effects of hate crime on individuals, family members, and peers.
4. Evaluating process of reporting crime to the police.	1. Experiences of reporting hate crime to the police. 2. Third party reporting and involvement of other agencies.
5. Recommendations for improvements to the engagement process.	1. Regular engagement 2. Improvements to police training.

The key themes identified in Table 14 have emerged from an amalgamation of comments of participants from all of the focus groups during stage two of the research. It is important to reiterate that all the participants have learning difficulties and were able to discuss their own

experiences, providing the researcher with some valuable insight into their experiences with the police and some of the issues they face. Once again, as in stage one; participants are referred to as A, B, C, and D etc. in order to protect their identity. It should be noted at this point that some participants were more vocal than others; therefore this may be reflected in the responses discussed in this chapter. Levels of communication and confidence to contribute during the focus groups varied. Each question topic shown in Table 2 will be addressed separately and the themes explored in more detail in the following pages.

5.3 Experiences of the police

As previously discussed, the police have a responsibility and obligation to engage all sections of the community (Home Office, 2004; Crawford et al, 2005) despite some community members being fragmented and difficult to reach (Spalek, 2008). Friedmann (1992) discussed various concepts of community engagement and how much the police and communities should overlap, the most logical, according to Friedmann, is a partial overlap, the level of overlap dependent on the situation and circumstance. It is suggested that with regard to engaging vulnerable adults who are at risk of hate crime, that the overlap should be significant. Trojanowicz et al (2010) agree stating that engagement needs to be creative and innovative, no 'one size fits all' as areas, and people are diverse, their needs will vary, but the police must have daily, face-to-face contact with the community they serve. In order to gauge whether such engagement takes place with the participants of the focus groups, the question regarding the participant's experiences with the police was posed. The experiences could be in the form of reporting crime to the police, as a witness of crime, as a suspect, or simply in the form of general engagement. Information offered by the participants were encapsulated into three themes. These are:

- Experiences of engagement with the police.
- Engagement with female police officer preferred.
- Fear of the police.

5.3.1 Experiences of engagement with the police

Some participants who took part in the focus groups discussed positive experiences and views of the police and seemed quite happy about their relationship with them. Examples of positive views of the police are illustrated below, which suggest some participants perceive the police to be helpful.

> "I got lost in ******, I don't know what happened, we were going to the cinema, I missed my group, I didn't know what to do, I was so frightened. The woman in the shop couldn't understand. I was frightened. The woman police officer and then the man was there helping me with the police. I wasn't frightened to go to the police station, no, not a bit. I went along and had a nice chat. I didn't know where I was. I didn't understand, they called my mum who came to collect me."
>
> Participant B4.

Participant B4 described an extremely positive experience where he found himself lost and alone in a city centre. He explained that he felt very frightened. He approached a security guard in the shopping centre because he thought he would be able to help because of his uniform. In this situation, the uniform of the security guard was important as it gave Participant B4 confidence that he would receive help. In this instance the uniform of the security guard was helpful to the participant, who stated he wasn't afraid of the guard, he knew he could help him because he was in uniform. The uniform conveyed a message of authority and power, interestingly this did not cause fear on this occasion, in a time of need it was seen to be helpful, which would appear that on this occasion, there was a contradiction to the suggestion by Trojanowicz et al (2010) that a uniform has the ability to encourage human rights unfriendly behaviour. The statement that the police uniform causes such behaviour is

strong, it surely depends on the individual officer. However, it is something that each police officer should be mindful of.

This contact with the police was extremely important to Participant B4 as it has shaped his opinions of them, which remain with him, something that the Home Office (2004) suggest the police need to be mindful of. A negative experience can affect a person's confidence in and perception of the police. This participant expressed that he is more than happy to approach the police if he needed to in the future as his experience was proactive and positive. Later in the discussion he discussed a preference for a female officer in the future, this may be, in part, because of his first experience, which was with a helpful, female officer. Other participants described being treated well by the police which provided them with confidence that they would be treated well in the future.

> "They was quite good. They asked me some questions and then if it happens again I would phone them again."
>
> Participant A1.

It must be noted that these positive experiences took place in the area where the members receive regular visits from a hate crime officer (who interestingly was female), therefore they have a positive relationship with the police and feel reassured that the police are listening to their needs and priorities, and they trust the police will help them, something that Pickering et al (2008) believe is the primary aim of community engagement.

Not all experiences with the police were as positive, many participants relayed accounts of negative contact with the police which have shaped their opinion of the police as a whole. These negative experiences, in the majority of cases, have prevented them from seeking help in the future, and have left these vulnerable adults feeling marginalised.

> "When I was 14 I got lost, two ladies took me to a police station. They put me in a cell, I thought they were going to arrest me. I was cross and frightened. The police didn't want to help me, they wanted to punish me. Why did they have to put people into a cell if they are lost?"
>
> Participant B5.

The experience of participant B5 has affected his perception of the police for the majority of his life, he associated being put in a cell as a negative thing that happens to bad people therefore added to his confusion as he had done nothing wrong. It appears that a lack of understanding with regard to learning difficulties may be the reason why he was put in a police cell, an issue that Gillen (2009) believe is because of the lack of specialist training in the recognition of learning difficulties and how to deal with a vulnerable person once a difficulty has been identified. Participants during stage one of the study recommended improvements to the training that police officers receive, it is believed that this would prevent experiences like that of participant B5 happening again.

> "I don't get involved with the jammy dodgers, they don't help people like me. I don't get involved with anybody that much. I like it on my own."
>
> Participant G5.

Participants G5's comments that the police don't like people like him would appear to suggest that he has little engagement with the police, and he perceives this to be because the police don't like 'people like him'. Whilst it is acknowledged that engaging some sections of the community can be difficult as the communities are so diverse, and some members are perceived to be 'hard to reach' (Spalek, 2008), the police must try to engage <u>all</u> members of the community (Home Office, 2004). It is suggested that participant G5 may not feel this way if the police adopted a meaningful engagement strategy in order to form good quality relationships with community members as suggested by Trojanowicz et al (2010). Increased face-to-face contact with community members will increase levels of trust and familiarity. Participant A5 below described an occasion which has affected his perception of the police, leaving him feeling very frustrated and angry with the police. In his opinion, if the police had spoken to him upon initial contact they may have realised that he was not drunk, and they may have been able to identify that he had a learning difficulty. This incident has tainted his view of the police and he doesn't feel able to approach them now. This is another account of

the police not recognising a learning difficulty and demonstrated a lack of appropriate communication skills and training in order to identify a learning difficulty (Gillen, 2009) and the medical model of disability, where the control is very much with the professionals (Centre for Inclusive Learning Support, 2012).

> "I was walking along once when the police van stopped. They got out and didn't talk to me, just threw me in the back of the van. They took me to the police station, they thought I was drunk. I wasn't drunk, I have learning difficulties. People tell me the police are there to help, but they didn't want to help me that day. They just wanted to throw me in a van."
>
> Participant A5.

Participant A5 quite rightly feels angry with the police following this incident. He described a desire to see changes to the attitudes of police officers, and frustration that they hadn't attempted to talk to him, just assumed he was drunk. Nichols and Quaye (2008) suggest the attitudes of some towards disability are deeply ingrained, and will be difficult to remove.

> "Yes I have, I don't think they have always been much good, all they do is take your postal code and date of birth and they do nothing. And they always say that they can't do nothing unless they have got evidence and that always gets me annoyed. Mind you, the police community officer was very good. They come and have a chat to you one-to-one and everything like that."
>
> Participant A2.

Participant A2 describes how he finds the police unhelpful and that they don't do anything. He did, however, find experiences with a PCSO who visited had more time to spend with him. Frustration that he has contacted the police on a number of occasions but always gets told that they can't do anything to help him was expressed. It is believed that regular, proactive, positive engagement will provide a solution to issues experienced by Participant A2. It would provide an outlet, someone he could talk to and seek advice/help from, also the police would be able to gather intelligence regarding issues and engage other agencies, as appropriate.

5.3.2. Engagement with a female police officer preferred

Other participants agreed that they would prefer to talk to a female police officer if they had to engage with the police as they felt a female would be more understanding and compassionate.

> "I find the best ones are the police women, you know. I had **** **** come to my house when I had my back door window bashed in and when I had my bedroom window bashed in."
>
> Participant F6.

> "Female police officers seem more friendly, and would have more time to listen I think."
>
> Participant D4.

All of the participants who said they would prefer to speak to a female police officer said so because they felt the female officer would have more time and would be friendlier.
A few participants said they had no preference as to whether the police officer was male or female. A small proportion of participants suggested they wouldn't approach any officers, regardless of gender.

5.3.3 Fear of the police

Some participants expressed feelings of fear of police officers. Describing very specific fears that the police would arrest them if they did something wrong. Below are some examples of the responses made by participants. These feelings would appear to agree with claims by Trojanowicz et al (2010) that as relationships between the police and marginalised groups, such as people with learning difficulties, has traditionally been poor. Because of this Trojanowicz et al continue to suggest that these members of the community could view the police as uniformed strangers who could possibly hurt them rather than help them. It is suggested that the police need to work harder at engaging all members of the community in order to remove these fears (Trojanowicz et al, 2010).

> "I don't know what to say to them, I panic. In case I say the wrong thing. If I say the wrong answer I can be in trouble then."
>
> Participant B1.

> "Coppers aren't nice to you; they scare me because they give you funny looks and want to throw you in jail."
>
> Participant A7.

> "I'm scared of the police, I think they will hit me with their stick. I see them hit people on telly with the stick."
>
> Participant A6.

Participant A6 described being afraid that the police would hit him with a stick if they saw him. This perception has been influenced by watching television programmes about the police. It should be noted that the influence a television programme has on the community could be the same to all viewers, whether the viewer had a learning difficulty or not. These influences are not unique to participant A6, however members of the general public, who may have more contact with the police may be more capable of putting the television programme into context.

It is suggested that the police uniform contributes to marginalised groups feeling fear. As discussed previously, Vadackumchery (2000) suggests that when a police officer puts on the uniform they can become human rights unfriendly, consciously or unconsciously, assuming a particular ego which can cause them to act in an authoritarian manner. Interestingly, the police officers (female) who maintain regular engagement with adults with learning difficulties in one area, attend the group on a monthly basis do not wear their uniforms. This would suggest that there is awareness within the police service that the uniform can intimidate some members of the community. Miller and Hess (2007) agree with this, stating that the uniform is indeed a reminder to the public that the police are a figure of authority and power. Whilst it is acknowledged that authority and power play a major part in policing, there are also times when softer skills are needed and more appropriate. It is suggested that with appropriate disability awareness training police officers would learn about how the

uniform can affect the engagement process with some members of the community. Being mindful of this may allow the opportunity for police officers to alter their body language, voice and language in order to counteract or compensate for the authoritarian image that the uniform portrays.

5.4 Evaluation of current engagement with the police

In an attempt to learn more about the current engagement process between the police and adults with learning difficulties the researcher was keen to find out if the police had any regular contact with the members of the group. Some of the support workers who participated in the first stage focus groups discussed some good practice that occurs across South Wales where hate crime officers or PCSOs drop in to have a coffee with the group on a fairly regular basis. The researcher was keen to discover whether this happened across South Wales. This regular interaction and engagement that takes place is important if the police are to gain a robust understanding of the issues faced by those who have learning difficulties. Data generated during this questioning topic was encapsulated within two themes. These are:

- Positive feelings towards engagement with the police.
- Areas of good practice where regular engagement occurs.

5.4.1 Positive feelings towards engagement with police

Participants in the majority of areas discussed how they have experience of police officers calling in to visit their support groups in the past, and their disappointment that this does not happen anymore. Visiting this section of the community would provide the police with a valuable insight into their needs and concerns, enabling them to attempt to fulfil one of their responsibilities and obligations, an important step towards engaging all members of society (Home Office, 2004). Participant H1 describes experiences of engaging with the police, and

taking part in police training with regard to diversity, describing disappointment that despite the training being of value to the police, it had stopped. It appears that this has added to participant H1 feeling socially excluded and marginalised, something that Riddell et al (2001) and Sheppard (2006) suggests often occurs to adults who have learning difficulties.

> "We have done, we've had a couple of them come in over a couple of weeks, they have come to speak to me about a couple of things, and we do training with the police but it is quite difficult because it is very costly and they don't pay us to do any training for them, they say it is very valuable, but they don't come anymore."
>
> Participant H1.

The majority of participants expressed a keen interest in this engagement continuing, there was some disappointment that it hadn't. With ever-decreasing police numbers maintaining regular contact with communities is a challenge but working alongside other agencies it is believed that good quality engagement can take place, if the police value such engagement. The participants described a desire to talk to the police, as they were talking to the researcher, to inform them of how they feel and their particular needs.

> "Well this is it, they should come and see us here, like you, without a uniform. How many people would speak to you if you had a uniform on?"
>
> Participant E1.

Some participants shared their concerns over the police uniform, participant E1 suggested that he would like to see the police attend the group without wearing their uniform so that members who are afraid of the uniform can talk to them and get to know them in a more relaxed atmosphere. The preferences within the focus groups varied considerably, this poses a challenge for any potential engagement. However, the clearest message that came across from the participants was the desire for the police to spend time getting to know them. The views expressed by participant E1 were shared by many of the participants, it would appear that there is a real desire for engagement or involvement with the police. Myhill (2006) in his 'Typology for Community Engagement' suggests that there are many

levels of engagement open to community members, should they wish to engage. It is suggested that the majority of participants at this stage would welcome the opportunity to engage at the strategic consultation level which would enable them to advise the police of their specific needs of people with learning difficulties to ensure that policing methods could be tailored to meet them.

> "We used to have a lady come in every Thursday to see how things are. She used to make us a cup of coffee but before Christmas she had a baby, I don't know if she will come back or not."

Participant H discussed her disappointment that the visits from the police officer stopped when she went on maternity leave without any explanation or assurance that someone would call in her place, expressing her uncertainty about whether they would see the officer in the group again. She described feelings of disappointment that the relationship this officer had formed and developed over a period of time had disappeared; along with a feeling of being undervalued as a result of this. This reinforces the message delivered by Trojanowicz et al (2010) that effective community engagement requires a degree of permanence, the same officers, and the same beats in order to develop good quality relationships with community members. Pickering et al (2008) consider community engagement as a useful tool to evolve and build trust within communities. In this case, it could be suggested that with better handling of forthcoming maternity leave and the early introduction of a replacement police officer who could continue the engagement would have been desirable. However, if the engagement was an individual decision by an individual officer then this is unlikely to continue. This type of engagement needs to receive top-down commitment and priority from senior managers, becoming and important and integral part of the policing strategy.

> "I'd like a police officer to pop in now and again."
>
> Participant D3.

> "I'd like the one in the blue, in the blue top. They are nice, the ones in black are not very nice. The ones in blue are more interested in what we have to say."
>
> Participant E1.

> "Yes, I agree, PCSO. They have more time for people."
>
> Participant G.

Many participants positively welcomed regular visits from police officers, some suggested they would prefer a PCSO to call, as they feel PCSOs have more time to sit and talk to them and get to know them. Participant E1 suggested they would be more interested in them.

5.4.2 Areas of good practice.

As discussed previously, there are pockets of good practice, where police officers regularly visit the 'People First' groups in order to get to know the members, thus breaking down the barrier between the police and this section of the community, something that Davies (2010) suggests needs to happen as these barriers can make a person with learning difficulties feel vulnerable. The support workers discussed the benefits of such visits, therefore it was of interest to the researcher to hear about these visits from the perspective of adults who have learning difficulties.

> "We've got ****, she comes to see us a lot. She brings another woman with her…they don't wear uniform. She talks to us about things that are happening to us and says she will help if we need it. She has coffee with us. She says we can report crimes through her and tells us about hate crime and stuff."
>
> Participant F4.

The researcher asked participant F4 if he found these visits helpful and whether he would feel able to approach the hate crime officers to report a crime or incidents if he felt he needed to. He expressed his ease with the officer, and thought her visits were invaluable to the group. There was a sense that he felt valued, included and important because the officer was taking time to get to know them. It appears to provide the majority of members of this particular

group with some reassurance that they could contact a police officer that they feel comfortable talking to if they needed to.

> "I have a police officer come to visit my group, I don't know how often, maybe every couple of months."
>
> Participant C5.

The experiences of regular visits by police officers were described as a positive step as the police were able to find out about issues that were affecting these members, from their perspective, something that they are obligated to do (Home Office, 2004). Trojanowicz et al (2010) suggests that historically the relationship between the police and marginalised sections of the community has been poor, so the engagement that is carried out in these areas is a positive, proactive step in the right direction to developing good quality relationships with potentially vulnerable members of the community. Myhill (2006) suggests that all parties must be willing to participate in the process of engagement if it is to be a success. It would certainly appear that the majority of participants during this stage of the process were willing to engage.

5.5 Interpretations of hate crime

Support workers, during the first stage focus groups, suggested there was a lack of understanding as to what hate crime is. Gerstenfeld (2004) suggests this is a common issue that may prevent victims of hate crime from reporting the crime to the police. Participants were asked to tell the researcher about their knowledge of hate crime. Information provided during stage two focus groups can be encapsulated in three themes. These are:

- Knowledge of hate crime.
- Experience of hate crime.
- Effects of hate crime on individual, family members, and peers.

5.5.1 Knowledge of hate crime

Some of the respondents in each of the focus groups indicated by shaking their heads that they did not know what a hate crime was. It is interesting to note that the majority of participants who had no knowledge of hate crime resided in the areas where regular contact with a hate crime officer did not take place.

Other participants of the focus groups articulated their thoughts and perceptions of what a hate crime is as follows:

> "Can I just say something here, right at the start? Over 700 reports of hate crime in Wales alone up from 2009 to 2011 the police have not bothered to help."
>
> Participant A2.

Participant A2 describes feelings of disillusionment that, in his opinion, the police are not concerned about hate crime and helping victims of hate crime.

> "There was a man who was hunted out of his own home, they set fire to his own home and there was another one here, I can't remember where but it was in ******* a woman who had her car smashed 36 times and the police didn't bother to come out each time. She was disabled. It was hate crime against the disabled, and hate crime towards people with a learning disability and the police did not bother to help. They don't want to know. They would soon want to know if you were murdered, oh yes, they would want to know then. Or if you had done a crime, oh yeah, you are arrested, but because you are being persecuted and hunted out of your own home or you are being hunted out, say if you were in public, say you go into a pub. There was a man tipped out of his wheelchair a few times and people thought it was quite funny. When he used to go out for a night out with his friends in ******* and the police didn't even bother to help. I had somebody come to interview me for Channel 4 and she rang me up and she said 'we can't use your story, why you are getting picked on is because you are fat, you ask to be picked on because you are a fat person'. You remember that woman that come?"
>
> Participant A2.

Participant A2 expressed bitter disappointment that the police didn't appear to want to help victims of hate crime, describing incidents where he felt the police had let vulnerable people down. Ilston (2009) suggests there is a significant under-reporting of hate crime, possibly due to a lack in confidence in the police. Participant A2 certainly appears to lack confidence

in the police and their ability to act when a hate crime has occurred, despite Giannasi (2010) claiming that the police have a duty and responsibility under equality legislation to recognise hate crime, this is a victims right. Despite this participants lack of confidence he discussed many attempts to seek help from the police.

> "If someone is kicking a ball against your wall of your house every evening and you tell them to bugger off, they won't go and you phone the police time and time again and then in the end they might stab you."
>
> Participant E1.

> "Calling me names."
>
> Participant G.

Many participants had some knowledge of incidents that would be classed as hate crime, such as kicking a ball against the wall of their house or name calling. Incidents that can leave a person feeling more disabled (Panorama, 2010) and can often escalate into more serious crimes of they are not dealt with (Learning Disability Wales, 2010).

Some participants were able to explain the link between hate crimes and adults who have learning difficulties, and a hatred for this group, as described by Scope (2008).

> "People doing horrible things to people with disability."
>
> Participant B2.

> "Some people with learning difficulties get hounded in their own homes. It's not right, the police need training, that's what they need is training – when it's continuous all the time."
>
> Participant E1.

> "And yes, people can be picked on because they have a learning disability, but there can be different things about people."
>
> Participant A7.

Participant A7 displays knowledge of hate crime occurring to other members/sections of the community. The levels of knowledge of hate crime varied considerably amongst participants. It would be encouraging to see widespread understanding of not only what hate crime is, but how it can be reported and who to go to for help.

5.5.2 Experiences of hate crime

Participants during the first stage of the study suggested that adults with learning difficulties that they support tell them of hate crime that are being experienced on a regular basis. Participants during stage two focus groups were asked to discuss their experiences of hate crime. Whilst a small amount of the participants felt they had not experienced a hate crime, the majority of participants discussed many incidents that they have faced, and indeed do face. It should be noted that the participants who did not feel they had experienced hate crime, were the participants who were not able to explain what hate crime is, and they did not reside within the area where regular contact with a hate crime officer was made.

> "I don't think so, I'm happy I am. I don't think anything like that has happened to me before."
>
> Participant F.

As discussed, the majority of participants discussed regular incidents of name calling, harassment and being sworn at in the street.

> "My partner and me would catch the bus but you won't catch us doing that anymore because of them calling us names. We walk to town instead now. We were fed up of being attacked all the time."
>
> Participant C7.

Participant C7 described regular incidents that affected her and how she lived her life. Unable to catch the bus for fear of being called names, she and her partner walk to town instead in order to avoid the perpetrators. This is a common coping mechanism, according to Learning Disability Wales (2010).

> "I was coming home at 10.00pm and people were swearing at me. Police wouldn't help. You don't want that, do you? At that time of night?"
>
> Participant H6.

> "I think I had a hate crime happen to me, I was coming back to ***** from London, on the train. A gang of boys were coming up to me and they were saying things to me. I put my fingers in my ears so I couldn't hear them. They were putting their fingers in their ears too, laughing at me. One of them was right in my face. I was really frightened. I didn't know what to do. I won't catch the train again."
>
> Participant E4.

Participant E4 described how this incident made her feel. She was extremely frightened and couldn't understand why this was happening to her. She is a lady who is able to live independently and she had made that journey many times before. She expressed that she would not make that journey alone again, she is too frightened. Once again, this is a coping mechanism that is often adopted, rather than reporting the crime to the police (Learning Disability Wales, 2010). She had, up until this incident, felt completely comfortable travelling alone. She did not report this incident to the police.

As discussed in the focus groups with the support workers, adults with learning difficulties can also experience hate crime whilst in their own home. Participant G talks of her experience with a bogus caller attempting to gain access to her property. Fortunately she has a good support network, with a sister close by who was able to help, they called the police.

> "Erm...yes I did something silly and I shouldn't have. Because I thought, someone knocked on my door and I thought it was the gas and I let them in, which I shouldn't have, and they asked to look in the kitchen, because of the gas and the electric and I asked them for the badge. You know, they wear the badge and they showed me the badge. So my sister phoned up, I told me sister, and she phoned them up and it wasn't the gas at all, he never had, I looked out the window and he never had the name of the gas on his van, it was just a plain van it was, so my sister phoned up and at the corner of the street they have erm, like a crimewatch thing and we had that in the window and my sister phoned them up and I had the police."
>
> Participant G.

> "When I was living in ***** Street years ago kids would slam on the doors and things and my support worker phoned the police right. And all they did was stop the car and look around, they didn't get out of the car and warn them. We rang the other police up, and fair play they came back to see me to see if we were all right, and warned them and everything is fine at the moment."
>
> Participant E.

Participant E described an occasion where she felt she needed to call the police regarding kids banging on her doors at night. She felt happy that the police came back after the event to see if she was okay.

Participant A2 discussed incidents where a neighbour threatened him until the point that he retaliated. The police were called and he was told he could be arrested himself. He felt that the police had been unfair as he was only retaliating. This is recognised as a problem by Mind (2007as the victim of hate crime will feel the need to react and take action.

> "I would agree, I have my doorbell constantly rung one night and my window banged and the police came out on the Sunday and he was taking my neighbours side against me. Definitely. Because I had made a threat he didn't like it and he said 'oh you could be arrested yourself' but my neighbour can threaten me and he gets away with it, he gets away with it, he can threaten me and everything like that, because he had a chopper in his hand, my neighbour and he said 'I'm going to chop your head off for ringing the police' and things like that, you know and the police didn't do anything."
>
> Participant A2.

> "I was walking home late at night, and it's quiet in the lane near my house. My father told me not to go there but I know it's quicker to get home. I was attacked one night. I won't go that way again. I told the police and am waiting to go to court…I don't know what is happening really…I don't hear from the police."
>
> Participant H6.

Participant H6 described a very frightening assault and the effect that this has had. This participant told the researcher that she lives alone and now, as a direct result of the attack, is frightened to be alone in her home, describing a fear that the perpetrator would be able to find out where she lives. Garafalo and Martin (1993) agree that incidents of hate crime can cause a victim to find it difficult to cope and high levels of distress are not uncommon. This participant's fears were compounded by a lack of information from the police regarding the pending court case, something that Davies (2010) agrees with, which increased her general feeling of marginalisation and unimportance in society. It really must be a priority to keep people informed of what is happening at each stage in the process in order to ensure vulnerable people come forward to report crimes in the first place.

5.5.3 Effects of hate crime on individuals, family members, and peers.

The researcher was interested in discovering what the effects of hate crime are, not only to the individual but to their family members, peers and wider community. Some participants expressed their feelings and the effect that hate crime has on them as individuals.

> "Down in the dumps."
>
> Participant E1.

> "It makes me feel scared, and afraid to go outside of my house."
>
> Participant H6.

> "I feel angry and upset. I don't like that they make me feel vulnerable."
>
> Participant E4.

> "I wouldn't wish it on my worst enemy."
>
> Participant A2.

> "I feel very very scared and very very vulnerable."
>
> Participant E.

> "I just got cuts and bruises but it really upset me."
>
> Participant H6.

> "Yes, sometimes I don't even like going out."
>
> Participant H.

The feelings described above by participants were typical of victims of hate crime, indeed Herek and Berrill (1992) and Weiss (1992) concur with the feelings expressed by participant H6 that victims can feel like withdrawing from society. Many of the participants described difficulty in coping with incidents or crime that have been committed against them. Some participants described how these incidents had affected other people around them also.

> "I tell my mother about it because there are two of them and they live in my street. My mother can't get out because she has a walking frame, she gets very worried about me."
>
> Participant G.

> "Since it happened to me my friends in the group have been scared of going on the bus. They are afraid that the same thing will happen to them and it is frightening."
>
> Participant E4.

Participant E4 raises an important issue, which Ilston (2009) agrees with, hate crime can have a wider effect on the local community. The hate crime experienced by participant E4 has had a negative effect on the group that she is a member of. They are afraid to travel on public transport as a result of her experiences. It is almost like a snowball effect; one person shares bad experiences and many more are affected. It would be interesting to see this in reverse, one person sharing their positive experience of engaging with the police and many more experiencing increased confidence.

> "My sister worries about me now that this has happened. She makes sure I know not to answer the door to anyone. I tell her not to worry but we only have each other."
>
> Participant G.

Participant G describes the fear her sister has for her following an incident at her home. Concerns of repeat incidents could possibly be laid to rest if improved engagement from the police took place in this area, and the confidence of these potentially vulnerable adults was raised.

5.6 Evaluating process of reporting crime to the police

The researcher was interested to find out if participants had reported crime or incidents to the police in the past, what their experiences were, and if they would feel able to in the future. Data provided during this stage of the focus groups can be encapsulated within two themes. These are:

- Experiences of reporting hate crime to the police.
- Third party reporting and involvement of other agencies.

5.6.1 Experiences of reporting hate crime to the police

Not all participants stated they would be willing to report incidents of hate crime to the police, this is not surprising as literature suggests there is reluctance to report. Sharp (2001)

suggests that in a Mencap inquiry during 1999 only 17% of respondents stated they had reported hate crime to the police. Some participants described a reluctance to report incidents of hate crime to the police because of a fear of repercussion if they did, something that Kelly (2008) this is a significant factor in why hate crime is under-reported.

> "I don't want to go to the police. They won't help me, they will tell me off."
>
> Participant A6.

Participant A6 fears the repercussion would be that they would get into trouble with the police themselves, Berzins et al (2003) agrees with this fear, suggesting that this often prevents reporting.

> "Yes and if somebody has been bad to us we are afraid to go and tell the police and that means that that goes on and on and on, because sometimes they could be afraid of the uniform or they have had a bad experience and you know, it can put them off."
>
> Participant E1.

Participant E1 describes a fear of reporting crime to the police, possibly due to a previous bad experience, something that Scott et al (2009) and Learning Disability Wales (2010) agree with, or perhaps they have a fear of the police uniform. The uniform, as discussed previously can encourage officers, according to Vadackumchery (2000) to become human rights unfriendly, whether they mean to or not, causing them to act as an authoritarian figure, something that could contribute to a potentially vulnerable adult with learning difficulties becoming afraid of the police.

> "Well 101 is absolutely useless, and things like that, he told me off and told me 'don't keep ringing us all the time otherwise we will arrest you'. They will always arrest me you see and okay maybe I shouldn't have made a threat but they always say 'I will arrest you'. And you can't make a citizen's arrest. I would like the right, for someone like me or ********* who are law abiding citizens to make a citizen's arrest you know, strengthened with police arrest, that's what I would like to see, the right to do you know, when we are harassed, you make a citizen's arrest strengthened by police arrest, I don't know what you all think about that?"
>
> Participant E1.

Participant E1 describes incidents where he is threatened with arrest, whether it be for calling the non-emergency number 101 to report incidents, or by retaliating when threats are made to him, suggested by Mind (2007) to be a problem for adults with learning difficulties. Adults with learning difficulties need to be confident that the police will help, and that they won't get into trouble.

> "I went to the police when my carer took money out of my purse. I told the police and they said there wasn't enough evidence, so she got away with it. They didn't treat me too bad."
>
> Participant H.

Some participants told the researcher that they would be happy to approach the police to report incidents/crimes as they have had experiences with the police in the past that were positive.

> "I'd be happy to go and report a crime to the police."
>
> Participant B4.

> "I would tell the police, I would tell *****. She comes here to see us, I like her. I think she would help me if I needed it."
>
> Participant A4.

Participant A4 describes how she would be able to approach the hate crime officer who regularly visits her group. This regular engagement would appear to be increasing the level of confidence and trust in the police, which should be one of the primary aims of community engagement according to Pickering et al (2008). Here we see the fruition of proactive engagement with this particular group. It is encouraging to hear that they would be happy to discuss issues.

Some participants described their frustration and disappointment that they had not heard anything throughout the course of the investigation. This is an issue that Davies (2010) suggest can result in offenders not being brought to justice. Stone (2008) believes that adults with learning difficulties are less likely to bring offenders to justice than adults who do not

have learning difficulties, suggesting adults with learning difficulties are not treated as equal citizens.

> "I'm waiting to go to court, but I don't know anything. I don't know what will happen. I don't know if he's out of prison. I'm afraid to go out. Why won't they tell me anything?"
>
> Participant F7.

Participant F7 describes frustration about the lack of information provided to her, and the effect this had on her. This experience is the opposite of what should be happening, according to the Ministry of Justice (2013) who state that victims of crime should be kept informed of progress during an investigation by the police, for example if a suspect is being interviewed under caution, arrested or charged and any bail conditions should be communicated to the victim.

> "I reported a crime once, they came to the house and took a statement. I never heard anything after that, did I?"
>
> Participant F5.

> "The police didn't want to know when my mother rang them about the boys hanging around my house. They just told her to let them know if anything happened. I have been so afraid, but they don't care. What's the point?"
>
> Participant G6.

The experiences described by participant F5 and participant G6 are not likely to encourage further reporting of incidents or crime as they will most probably have lost confidence in the police as a result of not hearing anything, which concurs with claims by Scott et al (2009) and Learning Disability Wales (2010) that adults with learning difficulties may not want to report crime to the police as they may not be believed, or lack confidence in the police.

> "I went up to an officer once, I wanted to know directions. He shouted at me to go away. I was really upset by that. I definitely wouldn't go up to one again."
>
> Participant H.

The experience described by participant H above appeared to distress him and has affected his confidence in approaching an officer again. The police need to ensure that engagement with communities is of good quality, and according to the Home Office (2004) they need to be mindful of the 'first contact' with community members, as this first contact can shape the way the police are viewed.

Many of the participants indicated that they would be afraid to report crimes to the police for fear of repercussions, not only from the perpetrator but actions that other agencies may take if they feel that the person cannot cope.

> "More than likely, again, people with a learning difficulty have a carer coming in. It could be that if I tell on this person, or tell on that person, that there is a possibility that my support would stop and erm therefore they would be afraid again. Keep quiet as they are afraid of the repercussions."
>
> Participant E1.

Participant E1 describes a fear that if she reports the carer who is stealing money from her purse to the police, her support and care will stop. This perpetrator has a power over the victim and there is a power balance, which Berzins et al (2003) suggest is often a barrier to reporting crime to the police as the victim fears repercussions. There needs to be a significant change here. Adults with learning difficulties need to be given control and power over their lives, they should be able to seek help if they need it.

> "I'd be afraid of what would happen to me if I told. Would my social worker think I can't cope?"
>
> Participant D7.

Participant D7 fears that other agencies, such as Social Workers will feel she is unable to cope if she reports a crime to the police, therefore she is reluctant to. The police and Social Services should work together to provide appropriate support, and this must be communicated to potentially vulnerable people so that they will feel encouraged to come forward.

5.6.2 Third party reporting and involvement of other agencies

Some participants spoke about a reliance upon family members to call the police for them. It is claimed that some adults with learning difficulties possess limited knowledge regarding how to report such crimes to the police themselves.

> "My father called the police for me when boys were smashing my windows. The police did come around to my house but I don't really remember very well what they said. My dad took care of it."
>
> Participant D.

> "They scare me they do, I would rather tell *****. He would go to the police for me I suppose."
>
> Participant C6.

> "And again especially people with learning difficulties, they are more likely to come to the people first organisation than the police because they would be the people we can trust."
>
> Participant E1.

> "The only ones who support you really are my housing officer ******* ********, and she said 'let me know if he says anything like that'. And it means I've got to go through the police through her and through a social worker, you know. They take more notice of a social worker and a housing officer than they do me you know. It's a fact."
>
> Participant A2.

These experiences described above highlight the need of some vulnerable adults to have someone who will act upon their behalf. Some participants requiring a family member report incidents for them, others preferring to speak to their support worker, housing officer or social worker. There may be a number of different people/agencies who are involved with adults with learning difficulties each day. It is probable that each individual will feel comfortable talking to different people, with this in mind it would be beneficial to encourage third party reporting.

5.7 Recommendations for improvements to the engagement process

The researcher wanted to provide participants with an opportunity to put forward their own suggestions, thoughts and ideas as to how the engagement process and relationship between the police and adults with learning difficulties could be improved. The participants responded extremely positively and were able to provide many suggestions. These suggestions can be encapsulated within two themes. These are:

- Regular engagement
- Improvements to police training

5.7.1 Regular engagement

Friedmann (1992) suggests that the process of community engagement, the medium through which community policing is delivered, is often met with resistance. The participants of the second stage of focus groups were extremely positive towards engagement with the police, and those who do not experience regular visits from the police expressed a desire to see the police proactively engage with them, a similar response was expressed by the support workers during the stage one focus groups. Reasoning for this desire was a general agreement that the participants would like to be able to communicate their needs and feelings to the police. Participants of the focus groups were in general agreement that the police should visit them, get to know them and actively seek their opinions. These views would corroborate the views of Friedmann (1992) who suggests there is a growing desire to receive improved services from the police, along with power sharing and an opportunity to share decision making. The majority of participants certainly shared feelings that they have lots to say to the police, that engagement would be beneficial.

The researcher in this study discovered that gaining and maintaining access to groups of adults with learning difficulties with a view to establishing a meaningful relationship was

reasonably straightforward despite claims by Bell (2005) that 'hard to reach' members of the community can be difficult to engage. If the police approached organisations such as 'People First' with a view to engaging and developing a good relationship they would be welcomed.

> "Well this is it, the police should come and see us here, like you have, without a uniform. How many people would speak to you if you had a uniform on?"
>
> Participant E1

Participant E1 was very interested in seeing the police visit the groups on a regular basis, interestingly he described a desire to see the officers in plain clothes, intimating that possibly his fellow participants would not have been comfortable taking part in this particular research if the researcher had been uniformed.

> "I'd like a police officer to pop in now and again. It would be good for them to get to know us."
>
> Participant G1.

> "I'd like to get the police involved in this discussion. Yeah, I mean they should though shouldn't they? They should know what we feel about things."
>
> Participant A2.

Participants G1 and A2 expressed a desire for the police to know how him and other members of the organisation feel about things. This is a positive expression of a wish to be involved, to be consulted.

However, in order for opportunities to engage to become available to people, the police need to take the initial step in order to discover their engagement requirements.

> "There used to be a police forum that we had a place on, when they got people in from different areas to talk to, erm but they kept not telling us when it was. But they never used to tell us *****, that's the trouble. But they should have, shouldn't they? We got fed up with it in the end. People first would have a right to do it, be nice to get somebody on it, isn't it? But to be honest, when we were there it wasn't very useful. After all the hard work of trying to find out where it was and when it was."
>
> Participant H4.

Participant H4 described with considerable frustration that members from his people first group used to be involved in a police forum, but it became increasingly difficult for them to

find out when and where the meetings were to be held. This appears to be an example of the police failing to take full advantage of the willingness of a group of 'hard to reach' members of the community who merely wish to communicate their needs, priorities. This is a disappointment as this group of people have a lot to offer the police in terms of educating the police in how to recognise learning difficulties and how to deal with a victim, witness or suspect who has a difficulty.

> "I feel that the police don't understand people with learning difficulties. They could sit down and talk to the person. Some people don't like the uniform. Especially like the ones who can't talk, they can't understand what the police are saying to them."
>
> Participant D1.

> "Take time to get to know the person first. That's all. Take time to learn about what they need."
>
> Participant G1.

> "I wish they would speak to me. They talk to my carer or support worker. I'm like 'hey' I'm here…why won't they talk to me?"
>
> Participant C1.

> "I'd like to visit a police station. The group used to go with probationers. I haven't been."
>
> Participant G7.

5.7.2 Improvements to police training

Participant A2 below suggests the police need to receive improved training with regards to recognising learning difficulties and how best to deal with victims, witnesses and suspects who have learning difficulties. The police may have difficulty in identifying a person's vulnerability, particularly if the learning difficulty is mild but it is vitally important that they are equipped with the skills to recognise learning difficulties so that an appropriate level of support can be provided. Friedmann (1992) suggests that resistance to changes in the way things are done could be an issue, which highlights the need to change the attitude of the police culture in relation to engaging marginalised groups.

> "I reckon the police should have more training as to what to do you see, they don't understand learning difficulties, you see, we voted on 3rd March to give the Assembly more power to do things and I believe the Assembly, as we have voted in March should give the police more power to do things, you see, because that's what we voted for as an electorate, otherwise we have wasted our vote."
>
> Participant A2.

> "They need training, they need to know more about learning difficulties."
>
> Participant C7.

> "If they know more about learning disabilities then perhaps they will help us more when we need it."
>
> Participant A2.

It appears that the participants above feel that the police lack sufficient knowledge about learning difficulties. Once again these participants highlight the need for adults with learning difficulties to be involved in diversity training. They recognise the need for the police to have a greater understanding of learning difficulties.

5.8 Photo Elicitation Stage of the Focus Group

Photographs can be found in Appendix E. Table 14 shows the order in which photographs were shown and key emerging themes from this part of the process.

Table 14: Stage Two Photographs and Key Emerging Themes

Photograph	Key Emerging Themes
1.Two male patrol officers	1. Some participants happy to approach these officers. 2. Some participants expressed a fear of the police uniform. 3. Some participants stated that they would not want to approach these officers, they would prefer to talk to female officers.
2.Male patrol officer during royal visit	1General agreement that this is a pleasant portrayal of the police.

	2. Some participants expressed fear of the uniform.
3.Two female mounted officers	1. Many participants stated they would be happier to approach the female officers. 2. Many participants disliked the police horses, stating that they would be frightened. 3. One participant stated that the horse would help to break down the barrier for him.
4.Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) chatting to pensioner	1. Participants generally didn't remember seeing a PCSO on the street where they live. 2. There was a general agreement that participants would rather speak to a PCSO as they would have more time.
5.Male police officer with police dog	1. Some participants had good knowledge of what police dogs are used for. 2. Most participants agreed that they would not want to approach this officer with the dog. 3. One participant again felt that the presence of the dog would help to break down the barriers.
6.Riot officer with police dog	1. Most participants were frightened of this officer.
7.Police officers in riot gear	1. There was general agreement amongst all of the participants that they would not want to approach these officers, and they felt frightened.
8.Police officers in riot gear and football fans	1. Many participants claimed to have seen images like this on the television, there was a general agreement that these officers were not approachable.
9. Riot	1. Participants were generally afraid of the scene, and would not want to approach these officers.

1. **Two male patrol officers.**

Photograph 1 (see Appendix E(a)) was shown to the focus groups, and hoped to seek the views of participants on the police uniform, and gender of the police officers. There were conflicting opinions with regards to whether the participants would be happy to approach the two male police officers. Some participants claimed to be perfectly happy to approach them, whereas many in the groups stated that they would be too afraid to approach them due to the uniform and because they were male.

> "I think I know him, he's from *****. I'd be happy to approach them. Why are they wearing yellow?"
>
> Participant A.

> "I wouldn't want to talk to them, I don't like the uniform. It frightens me."
>
> Participant A6.

> "I don't really want to talk to them, I'd prefer to talk to a lady. I wouldn't feel happy."
>
> Participant D4.

> "Sometimes the police do help me but they have an attitude. Sometimes they take it seriously, sometimes they don't. Only female officers offered me support."
>
> Participant B4.

The fear expressed by many participants with regard to the police uniform, it is suggested by Vadackumchery (2000) is possibly due to the officers adopting a human rights unfriendly attitude when they don the uniform, whether consciously or unconsciously.

2. **Male patrol officer during royal visit.**

> "I like this picture. They all look happy."
>
> Participant H.

Photograph 2 (see Appendix E(b)) was shown to participants. Whilst there was a general

agreement that the picture is a happy scene, with the police officer and members of the public looking quite relaxed and happy, some participants still expressed an uneasy feeling about being able to approach the officer with similar comments regarding his uniform and the fact that he is a male officer.

3. Two female officers on police horses.

Photograph 3 of mounted police officers (see Appendix E(c)) encouraged some interesting discussion, the majority of participants expressing a preference to talk to these officers as they are female. A small amount of participants had no preference regarding the gender of police officer.

> "I prefer female officers, they are more sympathetic."
>
> Participant A2.

> "I'd prefer female to male. I'd prefer to talk to female than the guys. Females are better than them. Less attitude than the male officers. I feel like I'm being 'attacked by their attitude'."
>
> Participant B4.

> "I had dealings with a male police, not helpful. I think female would be better."
>
> Participant H7.

> "I don't mind if they are male or female."
>
> Participant C6.

Some interesting conversation took place with regards to the horses in the photograph. Many participants expressed a fear of the police horse, describing feelings of fear. However, participant D1 expressed his willingness to approach these officers because they had the horses as he would feel considerably more able to talk to them because the horse broke down the barrier between him and the police officers. He stated that he would be unwilling to approach the officers without the horses present.

> "I don't like it, I wouldn't go to them if I had a problem."

Participant H.

> "I don't like the horses, they are scary."

Participant C2.

> "I like the horses, I would approach them…I wouldn't approach the officers without the horses. I like the horses."

Participant D1.

4. Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) engaging with pensioner.

> "I never see the PCSOs where I live. I only see coppers in the cars chasing the boys."

Participant G.

> "I'd rather speak to a PCSO, they have more time for us."

Participant E1.

Photograph 4 (see Appendix E(d)) prompted discussion about PCSO and how participants feel about approaching these officers. Many of the participants expressed a feeling that a PCSO would have more time for them and would be more approachable. Although not many of them have regular contact with a PCSO. The positive views expressed by many of the participants would appear to agree with the view of Madsen (2007) that PCSO presence will improve public reassurance. The role of the PCSO is vital to the relationship between the police and the public, maybe even more so to potentially marginalised members of the public.

5. Male police officer with police dog.

The researcher hoped that photograph 5 (see Appendix E(e)) would prompt further discussions about the use of animals. Whilst the majority of participants expressed feelings of fear because of the dog, and a fear that the dog would hurt them, participant D1 displayed good knowledge regarding the use of police dogs.

> "We went to ******* and saw a police dog, the man said to chase a man and grab him like that."
>
> Participant E7.

> "If someone ran away and lie in the bushes, those dogs would smell them."
>
> Participant D1.

> "I don't like that one. I don't think it's a nice dog. [Crying] I don't like the dog, I'm upset because my dog just died."
>
> Participant C4.

> "I like the dog, they are trained for emergencies. They aren't pets."
>
> Participant D1.

6. Riot officer with police dog.

A further photograph showing a riot officer this time with a police dog (see Appendix E(f)) was shown to all participants, and as before the majority of participants expressed feelings of fear in relation to the dog, however, participant D1 preferred the prospect of approaching the police officer who has an animal.

> "I definitely wouldn't go near him, no way! I'd be too frightened."
>
> Participant H.

> "I would. I like dogs, I would go up to him. If he didn't have the dog I would walk away."
>
> Participant D1.

> "I wouldn't approach him, the dog might bite me. I don't like animals. The dog would put me off."
>
> Participant G.

> "If the dog is there, he is there to help you. The police will protect you. I can't explain. My father has two dogs, small baby ones. I can make friends with dogs. I'm not nervous."
>
> Participant D1.

> "The dogs will smell where you are, I'll tell you why. The dog can go faster than the car."
>
> Participant D1.

Once again, the presence of the dog would appear to assist with breaking down the barrier between the officer and vulnerable adult for the minority of participants.

7. Police officers in riot gear

The photograph (shown in Appendix E(g)) showing police officers in riot gear was shown to participants in order to gain some understanding of how such images make the participants feel. All participants described feelings of fear, some commenting that they have seen the police dressed like this on television, and in the city.

> "They look a bit mean. I see them on the telly."
>
> Participant A6.

> "I saw them once in ******. There was football on that day. I got really frightened and wanted to go home."
>
> Participant E.

> "That one is smiling, but I still don't like them."
>
> Participant H.

8. Police officers in riot gear and football fans.

A photograph (shown in Appendix E(h)) was shown to participants in order to facilitate conversation regarding how such images make participants feel. The image was not unfamiliar to participants, many of them expressing that they had seen such scenes in the past.

> "They are football fans. I see this on the telly."
>
> Participant E6.

> "I'd run the other way. I'd be frightened. I wouldn't go onto a police officer like that."
>
> Participant C6.

There was agreement between all participants that this photograph was frightening, many described seeing images like this on television, but not in real life. There was an overwhelming agreement that these officers were not at all approachable.

9. Riot.

A photograph showing a riot scene (Appendix E(i)) was shown to participants, once again with a view to encourage conversation regarding scenes of riots, which are often seen on television.

> "Sometimes I've seen riot police. Sometimes it makes me frightened, it's difficult to explain."
>
> Participant C6.

> "I've been in a lot of fights."
>
> Participant B2.

> "People attacked me with a knife."
>
> Participant E3.

> "I wouldn't like them. Definitely wouldn't go to them if I needed anything."
>
> Participant H.

> "The men in the picture could be homeless, they could be sticking up for their rights."
>
> Participant B4.

There was agreement amongst all participants that this photograph was frightening, apart from Participant F who believed that the men in the photograph that the police were trying to gain control over may have been homeless people who were trying to stick up for their rights. No participants expressed any willingness to approach these officers.

Chapter Six

Discussion

6.1 Introduction

The aim of this study was to provide some insight into the experiences, feelings, thoughts, and perceptions of adults with learning difficulties in South Wales in relation to their engagement with the police; their experiences of hate crime and whether they feel comfortable and able to report crime to the police. It has been undertaken over a four year period during which there has been increased interest in encouraging members of the public to become more involved in society, including involvement in policing. Such involvement is encouraged by the government in the form of their 'Big Society' initiative (Conservative government, 2010). The process of engaging communities has in part, been difficult for the police as they face the obligation under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to engage all members of society (Crawford et al, 2005; Home Office, 2004), and some members of the community are harder to reach than others.

Prior to the presentation of the discussion, this chapter will begin by providing a brief reminder of why and how the study was undertaken. The researcher initially became interested in this subject during a consultation with a small group of adults with learning difficulties at the University of South Wales. It became apparent that issues such as hate crime were prevalent within the group, therefore the researcher was keen to explore this further in the form of this study.

For the purpose of this research study, views were obtained from two sources; firstly from support workers who are responsible for providing day to day support to adults who have

learning difficulties. Secondly views were sought from members of the 'People First' organisation across South Wales, all of whom have mild learning difficulties.

The data was collected during a series of focus groups which were held across South Wales. A variety of topics were discussed during the stage one focus groups with support workers from the 'People First' organisation (see Appendix F). These topics were informed by the initial literature review. Three issues were identified during the review of literature and the researcher aimed to discover the views, perceptions and opinions of support workers who have experience working with adults who have learning difficulties on a daily basis.

Firstly, the literature review suggested adults with learning difficulties are more likely to experience crime and disability hate crime on a regular basis. Secondly, these crimes and incidents often go unreported as these members of the public have a tendency to find alternative ways of coping, perhaps by adapting their lives to try to avoid incidents, or just accepting that this is how life will be, their norm. Finally, the review of literature suggested that of the cases reported to the police, very few resulted in conviction. Participants during stage one of the focus groups were asked to share their experiences, thoughts and views surrounding these topics. The data generated by the stage one focus groups was measured against the topics that arose during the literature review, as well as the data generated during the subsequent second stage focus groups.

It is acknowledged that the findings and discussions are peculiar to the participants that took part in this study and cannot be generalized across the wider population of support workers within this field. Similarly, neither can the views of adults with learning difficulties who took part in the research be taken as a collective view of the wider community. Nevertheless, the findings are helpful in providing evidence to support the issues discussed in the initial literature review, going some way to providing a deeper understanding of how the police

engage with vulnerable members of society, and provide suggestions on how police engagement with these groups could be progressed in the future.

6.2 The real nature of engagement, specifically between the police and adults with learning difficulties in the South Wales area.

This study, whilst hoping to understand the issues experienced by adults with learning difficulties, aimed to understand the views, experiences, perceptions and concerns of adults with learning difficulties in relation to their engagement with the police. This section will provide some discussion surrounding the real nature of engagement in South Wales.

As discussed, adults with learning difficulties are more likely to experience hate crime on a regular basis, in fact, according to The Disability Rights Commission (2007) state that nine out of ten people with learning difficulties have experienced a hate crime. The researcher believed that statistics such as these are disappointing, and reason for the police to proactively engage this section of the community in order to provide vital, adequate support. The engagement that takes place between the police and this section of our communities was examined across the areas that correspond with the South Wales Police divisions so that comparisons could be made, and pockets of good practice discovered. It is hoped that this study will inspire regular, proactive engagement with vulnerable members of the community who are willing to partake in such engagement, in order to develop meaningful relationships with police officers so that they are able to report crime or incidents that may occur. Some participants also expressed a willingness to partake in diversity training with police officers, which they believe will provide an excellent opportunity for the police to gain some understanding about their needs.

With regard to the questions raised by the literature review, this discussion will aim to clarify and possible contribute to a deeper understanding of community engagement and whether the

participants who have learning difficulties are indeed able and comfortable to report crime and incidents to the police and whether regular engagement takes place in order for them to do so.

It would appear that the majority of adults with learning difficulties who took part in the study do not experience regular contact and engagement with the police. However small pockets of good practice were identified. Whilst this is encouraging, it is also disappointing that this kind of engagement does not routinely take place across the entire South Wales area. The good practice seems to be evident as a result of actions by individual officers, not as a result of strategic decision.

In order to better understand where adults with learning difficulties find themselves placed with regard to engagement with the police, Arnstein's 'ladder of participation' (1969) can assist. This model, as previously discussed, sets out various stages in the engagement process applied to community engagement. It is possible to identify where people with learning difficulties appear to find themselves on Arnstein's ladder at present, and where we ideally need to see them sitting on the ladder of engagement if we are to ensure they receive the vital support that they need. This will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

6.3 Opportunities to become involved

As previously discussed, the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 places a statutory obligation on the police to engage all sections of the community (Home Office, 2004), which provides the police with the obligation to proactively engage in consultation with community members with a view to explore the causes of problems within the community, and work together to establish solutions (Trojanowicz et al, 2010). The review of literature revealed the need for the police to recognise that communities are extremely diverse, fragmented and often hostile (Spalek, 2008) and that there is no 'one size fits all' solution to community engagement

(Trojanowicz et al, 2010; Rix et al, 2009). Indeed if the police are to gain a robust understanding of the community they serve, they require input from the broad community which will encourage feelings of trust within sections of the community who have traditionally felt marginalised and wary of the police (Pickering et al, 2008), and are potentially vulnerable (Somerville, 2011). One such section of the community are adults who have learning difficulties whom fall into the Welsh Assembly Government's (2000) definition of vulnerable adults as they may not be able to take care of themselves or be able to protect themselves from harm or serious exploitation. The potential vulnerability of each person will vary according the difficulty or difficulties they face (Department of Health, 2001; Mencap 2012b). Historically, adults with learning difficulties have found themselves marginalised, the barriers that have developed in society do not help.

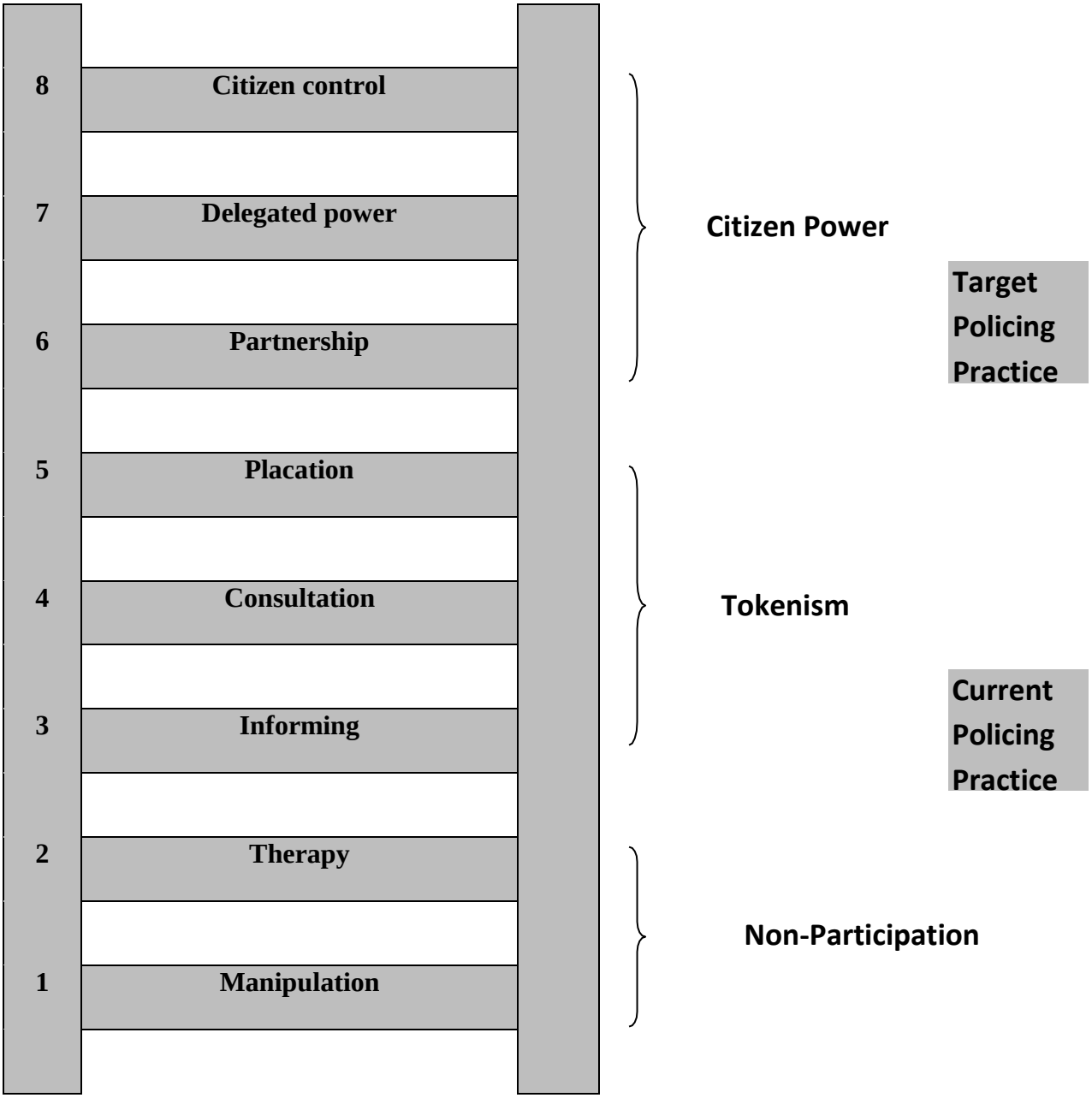
The government envisages a society, a 'Big Society' where all adults across England and Wales are actively encouraged to have a say in how they are policed and become involved in their neighbourhood group (Conservatives government, 2010), so now, more than ever there is a real need for a removal of the barriers that prevent some members of our communities from getting involved.

With regard to engagement, it is suggested by some commentators that providing a clear definition of community engagement is important so that an appropriate level of engagement by the police is achieved (Myhill, 2006; Home Office, 2007). The process of providing a definition, however, is difficult as community engagement can mean different things to different people at different times, depending on their particular circumstances (Arnstein, 1969; Myhill, 2006; Home Office, 2007; Wakefield, 2009). Whilst these difficulties are acknowledged, there is a need for the police to overcome them with the ultimate aim of engaging all members of the community in order to fulfill the obligation placed upon them by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (Home Office, 2004). To this end we should witness the

police engaging vulnerable members of the community in order to provide them with information and reassurance, discover their needs and allow them to become involved in the implementation of solutions to problems they are experiencing, if they wish to do so (Myhill, 2006). It would appear, however, from the results of this research study that such engagement does not routinely take place within South Wales. This view is supported by the results from stage one of the study. The support workers shared an opinion that the police need to proactively provide opportunities for engagement with adults who have learning difficulties, something that was not evident in all areas. The support workers discussed a general opinion that the adults they support want to be able to discuss issues, their specific vulnerabilities and needs with the police, indeed these adults suffer crime, and hate crime on a daily basis, that often goes unrecognised and unreported. Evidence from the study suggested that there are small pockets of good practice where hate crime officers, or a PCSO regularly attend the 'People First' group with the view to gain some understanding of the issues these groups face, and provide a point of contact, someone these adults can trust to report hate crime to. However, the benefit of such good practice and positive, proactive engagement was not shared by all the adults with learning difficulties across South Wales who took part in this study. There was a general agreement amongst the adults with learning difficulties who took part in the second stage of the study that they welcome interaction and engagement with the police, many of them expressing an interest in becoming actively involved with the training of police officers with regard to recognising learning difficulties and the issues they face. Myhill (2006) suggests that in his 'Typology of Community Engagement for Policing' that community members should be able to decide upon the level of engagement they require but there should be opportunities for every member of the community to become involved.

As previously discussed, Arnstein's ladder of participation (1969) is a useful tool which can provide some assistance in the analysis of where the police and communities reside with regard to engagement in general at present, and possibly where they need to aim to be with regard to engagement, involvement and participation in the future for improvements to be made. Figure 7 overleaf outlines where the police and communities need to target engagement and involvement in order to provide an improved service to adults with learning difficulties.

Figure 7: Adaptation of Arnstein's Ladder of Participation.



(Adapted from Arnstein, 1969).

The application of Arnstein's simple model to current policing practice in relation to community engagement in general would find the police placed at the tokenistic level of the ladder. The police regularly seek to consult with the community about their needs and preferences in each area, often through the form of monthly PACT (Partners and Communities Together) meetings where community members are encouraged to attend and to discuss their concerns and opinions about local issues with the police and partner agencies

(South Wales Police, 2010; Home Office, 2010). This displays some understanding on the part of the police that they need to meet the obligation placed upon them by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to engage community members (Home Office, 2004). However, it is suggested that this engagement is not common place in relation to adults with learning difficulties. The research discovered that the majority of participants gave no indication of engagement with adults with the police at all. This section of the community, have traditionally been marginalised and considered 'hard to reach', therefore it would appear that they are not comfortable and able to attend a general PACT meeting with other community members. Attendance at such meetings is dependent on community members seeking out the venue, date and time of the meeting, and travelling to and from the venue, for adults who have learning difficulties this information may not be easy without support. Therefore this displays an institutional barrier that stands in the way of engagement, as the police fail to organise themselves appropriately and ensure they address the needs of this particular section of the community by providing information regarding such meetings in the appropriate manner, in order to facilitate their participation and inclusion (Davies, 2010). Attitudinal barriers also exist, as failure to communicate to this section of the community ways in which they can attend such meetings displays an attitude or belief that people with learning difficulties are unable to do certain things (Walmsley, 2010). These attitudinal barriers are extremely difficult to remove, as they are often deeply ingrained (Nichols and Quaye, 2008). It is suggested that at present the police exhibit a view of disability from the medical perspective, that adults with learning difficulties are dependent on others, and subsequently excluded from society, something that is discussed by The Open University (2006) and the University of Leicester (2012), and the control belongs with the professionals as suggested by the Centre for Inclusive Learning Support (2012). Adults with learning difficulties reject this view of disability, as previously discussed. Participants of this study request inclusion, and

engagement with the police, wishing to be treated as equals in society, this concurs with the views of the Centre for Inclusive Learning Support (2012). Equal opportunities to become involved in the engagement process will ensure potentially vulnerable people are not ignored or marginalised.

Participants during both stage one and two of the study suggest there is a real need for the police to consult this section of the community, and get to know them, gaining an understanding of their needs and preferences. The proposed target level for more effective engagement with communities in general would be for the police to focus on the levels of 'citizen power' described by Arnstein (1969) which would allow members of the community to decide how much involvement they have in policing. Participants of this study discussed a desire to become more involved in training events, and consultation with the police to develop police skills in relation to learning difficulties and diversity. Whether community members are placed on Arnstein's ladder at the non-participation level or towards levels of citizen power, is the equal right of each individual to decide (Myhill, 2006). However, robust engagement and involvement with the police would require a move into citizen power in order to see adults with learning difficulties actively involved in decision making and planning in relation to issues they face (Arnstein, 1969) and requires a shift in the power balance (Evans, 2010; Lukes, 2005) and the deliberate involvement of citizens (Arnstein, 1969) something that does not appear to occur at present. Arnstein's model of participation and its ability to provide an opportunity to discuss the power balance between the two parties has enabled the researcher to highlight the requirement and need for the police to review and analyse their attitude in relation to engaging and actively including this section of the community. Myhill (2006) believes that the community members should be able to choose where they place themselves in this process, however with Arnstein's model we see that it is

not possible for the community to place themselves further up the ladder without the approval or acceptance of the police, hence the need for a change in attitude.

Friedmann (1992) discussed ideas surrounding the relationship between the community and the police, suggesting a variety of possibilities regarding how much this relationship overlaps. The most logical option, according to Friedmann was a partial overlap, where communities utilise the police as their official law enforcement arm that deals with the community's undesirables, criminals, law violators, order breakers. Friedmann suggests that how much the two entities overlap depends on the particular set of circumstances. Discussions during both stages of the study suggest that the circumstances of adults with learning difficulties are such that they find themselves victim to hate crime on a regular basis, therefore there is possibly a requirement for the police/community overlap discussed by Friedmann (1992) to be greater than for other community members. Many participants during the research articulated that they have no contact or engagement with the police at all, therefore limited opportunity to inform the police of their particular experiences or issues. Support workers were united in the opinion that the police need to visit their members in order to break down barriers that may exist.

These participants described their perception of a barrier that they feel exists between the police and the adults that they support, this barrier appears in the form of a lack of understanding of this section of the community, accompanied by insufficient training with regard to recognising and dealing with learning difficulties. These could be described as institutional barriers that Davies (2010) agrees can prevent adults with learning difficulties from reporting crime to the police and ultimately result in insufficient support being offered to potentially vulnerable adults.

One participant during the second stage of the study discussed how he felt 'attacked by the attitude' of the police. This highlights the need for more positive, proactive engagement on

behalf of the police to ensure this section of the community does not feel unable to approach them. This would corroborate the view of Davies (2010) that attitudinal barriers exist in society, and these have an effect on adults with learning difficulties.

There were some discussions in some areas which provided evidence of good practice, where the police are actively seeking to break down these barriers and engage effectively with adults who have learning difficulties in order to provide the most appropriate support.

6.4 Responsibilities of the police with regard to community engagement.

The responsibilities placed upon the police examined within the literature generally focussed on what is required of the police in order to ensure that all sections of the community are engaged and able to communicate their needs and priorities through this engagement process. This concept of engagement moves, as with Arnstein (1969) and the International Association of Participation (2007) from no engagement, through varying degrees of involvement or engagement to total citizen control with a suggestion from these commentators and the government (Conservative government, 2010) alike that the police service as an organisation should aim for the latter when involving citizens. As previously mentioned Myhill (2006) suggests that members of the public should be able to decide where they place themselves within this continuum of involvement, or ladder of participation. However, in order for potentially vulnerable members of the community to be able to decide where they feel comfortable, they first need to be provided with opportunities to engage, as often, it was discovered, there are feelings of fear that prevent engagement. Some members of the public will be happy with little engagement, others will wish to be more actively involved. Whatever their choice, all members of the community should be able and comfortable to seek help in time of need. Based upon the findings of this study it is suggested that it is the police who have control over the implementation and progression of

engagement with adults who have learning difficulties. In terms of engaging with the police, adults with learning difficulties will never have full control over the process. As discussed previously Arnstein's ladder explores the power balance, this research uncovered a willingness for the majority of participants to engage. Unfortunately engagement still does not take place. In respect of the desire of adults with learning difficulties in South Wales to engage with the police, the participants in the research displayed a very positive opinion and response to potential, regular engagement. Unfortunately, engagement does not regularly take place in more than one or two places within the research area.

6.5 Areas of good practice

Some of the support workers who participated in the first stage of focus groups discussed some areas of good practice that occur in pockets within South Wales. Such good practice is advocated by Davies (2010) as it demonstrates that the police have identified the need to organise themselves appropriately and are taking positive steps to engage with potentially vulnerable members of their community in an attempt to break down the institutional barriers that exist between them and this section of the community.

In one area a hate crime officer, in another a PCSO regularly visit the 'People First' group within their area of responsibility for a coffee and a chat on an informal basis in order to get to know members of the group, and gain a robust understanding of their needs, issues and potential vulnerabilities, something that Trojanowicz et al (2010) suggest is necessary if the police are to become facilitators, advisors, supporters of the community, rather than purely law enforcers who dictate to the community.

In the area where regular visits are made by a hate crime officer, it is a female officer who attends the group once a month. Interestingly she is out of uniform as it was felt the members would be more comfortable talking to her out of uniform. The members know her by her first

name, and she has become a familiar face that they feel they can trust. She has also developed a good working relationship with the professionals who support the members of this group, information flows effectively between them. As discussed earlier, it appears that this is the individual choice of this individual officer, it does not seem to be an operational strategy dictated from higher ranks, therefore it is difficult to believe that this engagement would continue if this officer were to be deployed elsewhere. The researcher believes this would be a disappointment for all who value such engagement, professionals and adults with learning difficulties alike.

Participants during the second stage of focus groups who reside within the area that receives this positive, proactive engagement from the hate crime officer report that such intervention has made a positive difference to them. It would appear that they are able to discuss issues they face with the officer and are reassured that through their support workers (if need be) they can contact the officer.

However, as previously mentioned, this good practice was not evident across the entire South Wales Police Service area. In the areas where such visits did not take place, both participants from stage one and two expressed a keen interest in the police visiting their groups. Both support workers and adults with learning difficulties alike welcomed regular contact with police officers or PCSOs so that relationships could be built. The participants during the second stage of the research suggest there are great benefits to them if regular, meaningful engagement between the police and these potentially vulnerable members of the community were to take place. This is a positive expression of a wish to be involved, to be included, and to be consulted. As previously discussed, Myhill (2006) suggests it is important for communities and individuals to choose the level of involvement that they feel comfortable with. It is felt that in the case of historically marginalised groups, the process of engagement would be greatly assisted by the police taking some initial steps in order to discover the

engagement requirements of this section of the community, possibly requiring a change in police attitude and culture as intimated previously. Without positive steps from the police, effective engagement would appear to be very difficult and indeed, it may never happen. Some participants during stage one of the study highlighted the importance of effective engagement between adults with learning difficulties and the police, suggesting an inability to do so will compound the problems that these adults face, further marginalise them and reinforce the fears of the vulnerable members of the community that the police should be trying to help.

Some frustration was expressed during stage one of the study that previous participation of adults with learning difficulties in a police forum had been difficult to maintain. It would appear that it became increasingly problematic to discover details regarding the arrangements of such meetings, resulting in disappointment. The result of these difficulties was the members deciding not to take part any more. This was the cause of frustration to the group, who were happy and willing to give their time to the forum as it provided them with an opportunity to sit with police officers and discuss engagement with adults who have learning difficulties and provide some education with regards to their needs and concerns, and how to deal with them. It also resulted in feelings of importance, of being valued. Taking such engagement away resulted in feelings of unimportance and exclusion. This appears to be an example of the police failing to utilise the willingness of a group of 'hard to reach' members of the community who would have been able to provide significant insight into their needs, priorities and concerns. Incidents such as this can actively prevent the social inclusion of adults with learning difficulties. Social inclusion is imperative so that an adult with learning difficulties can experience equality in our society (Sheppard, 2006).

There were some discussions during both stages of the focus groups where participants recalled visits from police officers taking place in the past, but these visits stopped. Some of

the participants expressed disappointment that these visits no longer took place, and some frustration was articulated regarding a lack of understanding as to why the visits stopped. One participant stated he wished to urge the police to come and talk to them as it would provide the police with valuable insight into their needs and concerns. It is acknowledged by Crawford et al (2005) that certain sections are considered 'hard to reach' but here we see the participants discussing situations where visits used to take place, and a link had been made between the police and these members of our community, but it no longer happens. It could be argued that the 'hard to reach' that Crawford et al discussed were, in this case, being 'reached' but the engagement ceased. The majority of participants expressed a keen interest in this engagement continuing, and there was some disappointment that it had not. One participant described a desire to talk to the police, in a similar setting as the focus group in order to inform them about how him and other members of the group feel and their particular needs, and how the police should be engaging with them in order for them to assist with incidents of hate crime, which otherwise may go unreported. This appears to corroborate the statement by Friedmann (1992) that there is an increasing need from the perspective of the community to receive improved services.

Whilst Clements (2006) suggest the police need to consider whether members of the communities they serve are willing to engage with them, the results from this study would suggest that the vast majority of participants positively welcome the opportunity to engage with the police.

One participant during the second stage of the study described disappointment that regular visits by a female officer stopped when the officer commenced maternity leave, the participant explained that there seemed to be little explanation as to what would happen, or reassurance that another officer would call in her place. There was a degree of uncertainty amongst other members of the group as to whether they would see an officer again. The

relationship that the police officer had developed over a period of time had disappeared, resulting in members of this particular group feeling undervalued. The researcher proposes that if engagement were to be given priority from senior management that it would continue. The general feeling amongst participants of stage one and stage two of the study was that regular visits from police officers were very much welcomed, even from participants who had never experienced regular engagement with the police in the past. A small proportion of participants who took part in the second stage of focus groups, i.e. participants with learning difficulties displayed a keen interest in regular engagement with a PCSO. There was a strong feeling that a PCSO would have more time to spend with them, and may be more interested in their particular issues. Reasons expressed by members of the groups who did not have previous experience of police engagement included a desire to communicate their needs and feelings to the police, something that Quinton and Morris (2008) and Rogers (2008) suggest is achievable through good quality engagement, and will result in the police being in a position to respond appropriately and effectively to the needs of the community. Quinton and Morris (2008) believe that the responsibility of such engagement should rest on local neighbourhood officers as they are in the best position to make contact with local residents within their communities. If the same police officers are assigned the same beat, this can facilitate this sense of responsibility for the people they serve according to McLaughlin and Muncie (2006) this sense of responsibility may have been absent in the case of the police officer who ceased engagement with a particular group in order to commence maternity leave may have avoided a feeling of loss and bewilderment on the part of the members she used to visit, if an appropriate explanation had been given, along with appropriate arrangements for another officer to call in her place. However, it could be suggested that due to police numbers falling in recent years (Innes, 2010) that it is increasingly difficult for a diminutive

police service to engage effectively with all members of the community as requested by the majority of participants during this study.

It is apparent that the majority of participants who do not experience regular contact with the police are asking for the police to change the way they serve the community, Trojanowicz et al (2010) concur suggesting the police need to transform how they serve the public, actively seeking public opinion and feedback.

This concurs with the views of Rogers (2008) and Quinton and Morris (2008) that good quality engagement can provide the police with not only vital information that can facilitate the fight against crime, but also provide the police with greater understanding of the community demographic and needs. Somerville (2011) agrees and expresses a need for the police to engage more effectively with the potentially vulnerable in order to better understand them.

One participant during the second stage of focus groups expressed an opinion that the police should visit his group regularly and they should wear plain clothes, intimating that members of his particular group would not want to speak to police officers in uniform. He provided an example, stating that members of his group would not have wanted to take part in the research study if the researcher had been wearing a police uniform. The reasons behind this perception were said to be that members of his group are afraid of the police uniform, and have had previous bad experiences with the police. This view would appear to agree with Trojanowicz et al (2010) who suggests that the police are often viewed as uniformed strangers who could possibly hurt people rather than help them.

Some participants during the second stage of the study discussed previous experiences of visits to local police stations organised to familiarise these adults with learning difficulties with the stations, police officers so that if they were ever taken to a police station, whether as

a victim, witness or suspect, that the experience may be less frightening as they would have some familiarity.

6.6 Why engagement is important

In the UK, we live in a democratic society, and democratic policing should be viewed as a continual process rather than an outcome and the police in this democratic society are accountable to the public and should be respectful of human dignity (Marx, 2001). It is suggested that a democratic society needs protection both by the police and from the police (Marx, 2001) and whilst the police need to be dramatic, violent and visible at times, if they become too dominant they will become a threat to democracy (Manning, 2008). There is a need for the police to apply force at times (Manning, 2008) but it is suggested there are times when softer policing skills are needed, particularly when attempting to engage potentially vulnerable sections of the community. As previously mentioned, engagement with communities is an obligation placed upon the police by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (Home Office, 2004).

This study has shown, that from the viewpoint of professionals who work with adults who have learning difficulties, and the adults with learning difficulties themselves, the process of engaging the potentially vulnerable section of our communities, adults with learning difficulties, is an issue and not something that is routinely taking place across the South Wales area. With increasing pressure on the police to perform with lower budgets, and fewer officers carrying out front line duties, it is not surprising that the requirement to engage all members of the community falls short when it comes to the 'hard to reach' section of our community.

The importance of good quality engagement was reiterated by all the professionals who participated in the study, along with concerns that the adults they support experience crime

and incidents on a regular basis that often go un-reported. This study provides a greater understanding of hate crime that adults with learning difficulties are facing on a regular basis, and the issue of reporting such incidents of crime.

Many of the participants during this study discussed issues and incidents of hate crime that they face on a regular basis, along with the majority of participants expressing an unwillingness to report these crimes to the police. The findings of this study have contributed an insight into the experiences of adults with learning difficulties in South Wales in relation to hate crime and the current engagement process, and the importance of good quality relationships between the police and this section of the community.

6.7 Awareness of Hate Crime

Participants during the first stage of focus groups expressed some concern that some of the adults they support have limited knowledge of what hate crime is as they have grown used to acts of bullying and harassment throughout their lives. Some of the respondents in each of the focus groups indicated that they did not know what a hate crime was. Learning Disability Wales (2010) suggest that often a person with learning difficulties will perceive the term 'hate crime' as too strong a term for what they experience, viewing incidents as part of everyday life, as their norm, as previously discussed, or mistaking it for anti-social behaviour. It is suggested by Gerstenfeld (2004) and Scope (2008) that poor understanding of what hate crime could be a significant factor in the under-reporting of hate crime. Whilst a small amount of the participants felt they had not experienced a hate crime, the majority of participants discussed many incidents that they have faced, and indeed do face on a regular basis. Some participants claimed they had no awareness of hate crime at all. It should be noted that the participants who did not feel they had experienced hate crime, were the participants who were not able to explain what hate crime is, which supports the claims by

Gerstenfeld (2004). These participants may also lack an understanding of their basic human rights, and this could prevent them from approaching the police (Berzins et al, 2003; Mind, 2007; Clement et al, 2011). It should be noted that the participants who did not know what a hate crime was do not reside in the area where there is regular contact with a hate crime officer, which was discussed earlier.

Some participants during the second stage of the study were able to portray some understanding of hate crime and it being classified as a 'hate' crime because the victim is targeted because of their learning difficulty.

6.8 Experiences of hate crime

The findings of this research provide some understanding regarding the experiences of adults with learning difficulties within South Wales with regard to hate crime. There appears to be a prevalence of hate crime incidents among participants; both the support workers and adults with learning difficulties who took part in the study described regular incidents occurring and with very few of these incidents being reported to the police. It would appear that the majority of participants try to ignore the incidents, or adapt their lives around them in order to attempt to avoid repeat incidents in the future. Participants of stage two of the study discussed experiencing incidents such as name calling, harassment, being sworn at in the street, being spat at on public transport, threats of physical assault and assault. Thomas (2012) suggests that these types of incident or crime are indeed 'hate crimes', if the perpetrator's prejudice against a particular group is a factor in determining who they victimise (Voice UK, 2012). In addition to the types of incident suggested by Thomas (2012), the support workers in this study suggested that members of their groups experienced incidents of theft, fireworks thrown through letterboxes, verbal abuse and indecent exposure on a regular basis. These incidents of hate crime are a cause of great concern for the support

workers, as they agree with the suggestion by Learning Disability Wales (2010) that often these ‘low-level’ incidents can escalate into threats, damage to property and in some cases, even murder. Ilston (2009) believes that if the police can deal with the ‘lower-level’ incidents and crime more effectively they could possibly prevent an escalation in their seriousness, and possibly divert the offender. The support workers strongly agreed that an improvement to the engagement process between the police and this section of the community in order for them to gain a greater understanding and awareness of the needs of this section of the community and the issues they face on a regular basis.

With regards to the frequency of incidents, both the professionals and adults with learning difficulties who participated agreed with claims by The Disability Rights Commission (2007) that a high proportion, approximately nine out of ten people with learning difficulties experience or have experienced hate crime, The incidents of hate crime discussed by the support workers were not limited to a particular area within South Wales, but a common problem, that support workers from across the area agreed their members experienced. The participants of stage two focus groups from across the research area described similar experiences.

The professionals/support workers during stage one of the study suggested a prevalent issue to their members are incidents of verbal abuse whilst on public transport, stating that many of their members, from across South Wales face this problem. The adults with learning difficulties corroborated these claims; one lady even spoke of an incident where she was verbally abused by an employee of the public transport provider. It must be stated that this experience was described from the participant’s perspective, the view of the public transport worker has not been obtained, therefore we do not know fully what the circumstances were during this incident, however, it is clear that the participant is distressed by her perception of events.

Both support workers and adults with learning difficulties alike described many incidents where they experienced incidents of hate crime whilst they were at home, describing these incidents as particularly upsetting as it caused them to feel unsafe in their own homes. Many of the adults with learning difficulties live alone, are able to look after themselves, and are able to maintain their independence. Incidents such as regular door knocking, shouting through letterbox, verbal abuse when they leave their homes can often leave them feeling unable to cope, unable to leave their homes, scared and vulnerable. The support workers agreed with Panorama (2010) and Giannasi (2010) that these experiences are particularly unsettling because the offender has specifically sought the victim and chosen them because of their disability, and vulnerability. Feeling unsettled is not the only effect of these incidents or crime on this vulnerable section of our community. A deeper understanding of how adults with learning difficulties across the South Wales area was sought and will be discussed in the next section of this chapter.

Some participants were unsure what hate crime is, this is thought to be a contributory factor in the significant under-reporting of such crime as they too will also adapt their lives to avoid future incidents, rather than recognising that such incidents are against the law. The study confirmed that a greater understanding of hate crime amongst adults who have learning difficulties is needed in order to ensure these vulnerable adults recognise when a crime has been committed.

The provision of hate crime education, and possibly education regarding learning difficulties within schools and education establishments could assist in the reduction of incidents, many of the participants described incidents involving young people of school age. Some participants during stage one of the study described an initiative where support workers are willing to provide such education within schools, unfortunately not many schools take advantage of this.

6.8.1 Effects of hate crime

Participants of both stages of the study described the negative effects of hate crime, such as feeling low, vulnerable and upset and angry as a result of hate crime, which corroborate claims by Herek and Berrill (1992) and Weiss (1992) and Garafalo and Martin (1993) that hate crime can lead to distress, sleep disorders, withdrawal, depression and feelings of helplessness. There was a general agreement between the support workers during the stage one focus groups that incidents of hate crime have a detrimental effect on the victims that they support, many of them feeling angry, vulnerable and frightened, often too frightened to be alone in their own homes, needing extra support from family members. This supports claims by Why do you hate me? (2010) and Weiss (1992) that hate crime can leave victims feeling more disabled and violated. Some of the participants during stage two of the research described a fear of leaving their homes and preferring to stay indoors, such comments suggest these victims are suffering from symptoms of withdrawal, as described by commentators (Herek and Berrill, 1992; Weiss, 1992; Garafalo and Martin, 1993).

Some participants during both stages of the study, professionals and adults with learning difficulties raised an important issue. Hate crime committed against one individual can have an effect on a multitude of other people. It can affect the immediate family members, who can become distressed and worried for their loved one, and feel a need to increase support given. It can also have an effect on the individual's peers and friends. Often, the friends of a victims of hate crime, or other members of the support group, who also have learning difficulties, and they can display feelings of distress and fear that they too may fall victim to perpetrators of hate crime. These views support the claims by Perry (2004) that incidents of hate crime affect the wider community, not just the victim. One example given by a participant during the stage two focus groups surrounded the experience of one lady who was verbally abused whilst using public transport, she will no longer catch the bus, and the wider

effect of this incident is that other members of her group as a result feel unable to catch the bus also, possibly due to a fear that they will become victims of hate crime, supporting the views of Clement et al (2011).

This particular participant's way of coping with the incident is to not catch that bus any more, therefore avoiding a repeat of her experience. The researcher was interested to discover if this was a common coping mechanism.

6.8.2 Coping mechanisms

Support workers during stage one of the study suggested that often members of their groups are unwilling to report crime or incidents to the police, describing ways in which their members choose to cope with hate crime instead. Often, it is suggested, rather than reporting crime to the police, their members will adapt the way in which they live their lives in order to avoid incidents. Participants during stage two focus groups agreed with these claims describing a preference to avoid, ignore or accept incidents or crime rather than reporting to the police, concurring with Learning Disability Wales (2010) who claim that victims will restructure their lives in order to avoid further incidents, suggesting that victims often assume hate crime is part of their everyday life, and not something that needs to be reported to the police. The suggestion by participants of stage one and two of the study that adults with learning difficulties who experience hate crime or incidents are more likely to accept it, ignore it or adapt their lives in order to try to avoid it goes part way to explain why very few people with learning difficulties report such crimes to the police, Mencap (Sharp, 2001) claims a mere 17% of adults with learning difficulties will report crime to the police. Other reasons for under-reporting will be explored later in the discussion chapter.

In the extreme, a victim can, according to Berzins et al (2005) move area as a result of hate crime in the belief that incidents will stop. Some participants during stage one of the study

described a members experience of moving area to get away from incidents outside her home, only to experience similar issues in the new area. Moving home is often, it is claimed, a temporary fix (Berzins et al, 2005).

The suggestion that hate crime can make victims feel that they don't want to leave their house, and a desire to avoid incidents of hate crime lead to adults with learning difficulties becoming more and more marginalised in our society, participants during stage one of the study expressed a fear that some of their members withdraw from day-to-day activities in order to avoid issues, which adds to the social exclusion of this section of the community, supporting claims by Clement et al (2011). Social exclusion and marginalisation can result in adults with learning difficulties feeling less powerful than people who do not have learning difficulties (Riddel et al, 2001). If a person feels they are unable to integrate effectively and simply catch the bus of their choice, then they are indeed being excluded and marginalised.

None of the support workers mentioned reporting the crimes/incidents to the police as a coping mechanism. This doesn't seem to be a natural choice for the members that the support workers have contact with.

Participants during stage one of the study suggested that some members of their groups, across the South Wales area, have grown up with harassment and bullying whilst in school as a child, and they learned to ignore it. This is their norm. This is what they are used to and they accept it. These views expressed by support workers corroborate the claims of that bullying as a child, which often goes unchallenged lays a foundation for this type of behavior to continue into adulthood.

Some participants suggested that often professionals, such as Social Workers have advised individuals to ignore incidents.

One of the participants during the stage one focus groups discussed a member of their group who has found himself potentially in trouble with the police because following continuous

harassment and threats of physical assault from a neighbour, he retaliated. Following his retaliation he was warned by the police that he could be arrested for threatening assault, something that he found to be extremely unjust, as he claimed the neighbor received no such warning. Mind (2007) suggest this is a common problem, and warn victims that they too could be viewed in the eyes of the police as a perpetrator.

These coping mechanisms, as previously discussed, in part provide an explanation for the under-reporting of hate crime. This subject was explored in more detail during the focus groups.

6.8.3 Under-reporting of hate crime

Scott et al (2009) and Learning Disability Wales (2010) suggest there are a number of reasons why adults with learning difficulties are afraid to approach the police, to include a lack of confidence, a fear that the police won't believe them, or possibly because of a bad experience with police in the past. This subject was discussed during all focus groups in an attempt to discover the views of participants in South Wales.

A multitude of explanations were provided by both support workers and adults with learning difficulties during the focus groups, as to why adults with learning difficulties may not feel able to report crimes to the police and they agree it is common place for crime and incidents to go unreported, supporting claims by Gillen (2009) and Sharp (2001). The support workers claimed that whilst the members of their groups are comfortable and able to discuss their experiences with the police if the police were to engage with them, many of them would feel unable to approach the police to report such incidents or crime for a variety of reasons. There was a general agreement amongst all participants that there is a belief/feeling that the police would not believe an adult with learning difficulties, if they were to report a crime to them. The experience of a couple who both have learning difficulties who reported a burglary to the

police was said to have an effect on the entire group. In this instance, the police attended the scene and refused to believe a burglary had taken place, instead suggesting a domestic incident had occurred. This couple shared their experience with their friends and peers. As a result, this groups display little confidence in the police, and support workers fear it has had a detrimental effect on the possibility of the other members seeking help if it was needed. This experience corroborates the suggestion by Scott et al (2009), Learning Disability Wales (2010) and Scope (2008) that victims of crime who have learning difficulties may feel that they won't be taken seriously, believed by the police, or that they have had a previous encounters and poor experience with the police that prevents the reporting of crime. The couple that discussed their experience are indeed reluctant to call the police in the future as a direct result of this experience. This encounter may have been quite destructive to their relationship with the police. The experience that this couple had with the police not believing them when they had reported a burglary is, according to Barrett (2013) and The Police Federation (2013) not entirely unusual. Barrett continues to comment on a report following the House of Commons Public Administration Committee hearing which suggests that police services are regularly massaging crime figures in order to make offences disappear with the ultimate goal of portraying a performance that is better than it is in reality. Senior officers have been reported to have been encouraging officers to persuade victims not to make a complaint, or downgrade offences to less serious crimes. For instance, multiple crimes in the same area would be recorded as a single incident, attempted burglary recorded as criminal damage, burglary recorded as theft from a property and thefts recorded as lost property. Therefore the experience that this couple had could be described as fairly common place among the general public, although it may have been easier to persuade this vulnerable couple that they were not taking any further action, than other members of the public who may be more savvy with regards to their rights.

Support workers suggested that a good relationship between the police and adults with learning difficulties is essential, and often the first encounter a person has with them can shape their perception of the police and affect the confidence they have in them, something that the Home Office (2004) agree with, suggesting the police need to be mindful that a proactive and positive experience of engagement will possibly increase confidence in the police along with a belief and faith that the voices of the victims will be heard and listened to. It is suggested by Murphy and Clare (2009) that the police are often reluctant to investigate crimes against adults who have learning difficulties vigorously as they see little point as the victims will be unable to give evidence in court, or as Scope (2008) suggest they could view the vulnerable victim as potentially an unreliable witness or possibly in need of extra support. The police are, in cases such as these, failing to treat these vulnerable victims who have learning difficulties as equal citizens. These victims are less likely to see offenders brought to justice.

The discussions surrounding this topic during the focus groups and in the literature suggest the police are not equipped with the appropriate tools or communication skills to assist and enable a person with learning difficulties the equal opportunity of accessing the criminal justice system. Scope (2008) believe and the participants in this study agree that this could be due to an insufficient level of training that is currently provided to police officers and criminal justice system professionals alike. This issue will be explored in more detail later in this chapter.

There seemed to be a general agreement that many adults with learning difficulties convey an unwillingness to approach the police to report crime, sometimes preferring to talk to another agency instead. One participant suggested his housing officer was more interested and helpful than the police, another suggesting her social worker was preferable.

Some participants described attempting to engage the assistance of the police when they experienced incidents. One particular gentleman claimed to have contacted the police on numerous occasions and spoke of his exasperation that the police did nothing to help him. Another participant described reporting a crime to the police to be told there wasn't enough evidence. Both participants described a lack of confidence in the police as a consequence supporting the claims of Rix et al (2009) that engagement with communities needs to be of high quality in order for it to be successful and to maintain high levels of confidence in the police. For these participants to feel the police couldn't be bothered with them suggests that the engagement they received was of poor quality. Once again, it could be suggested that the police did not act upon the crimes that were being reported in these instances because as Murphy and Clare (2009) suggest there is a belief that adults with learning difficulties would not be able to give evidence in court, or there may be concerns that the victims could be subjected to further trauma in the pursuance of justice.

Some participants in both stage one and stage two focus groups described the potential fear of repercussions if a crime or incident is reported to the police. This agrees with the suggestion by Kelly (2008) that under-reporting of hate crime is possible due to social isolation and a fear of what will happen to the victim if they do report crime to the police.

Support workers suggested that the victims may fear repercussions from other agencies, such as Social Services, who may deem the victim as unable to cope. This was corroborated by some participants with learning difficulties who feared reporting crime to the police, particularly if the perpetrator was in a position of trust, such as a care provider, for fear that the provision of vital services would be withdrawn.

Some participants during the second stage of the study described a fear of the police, and a fear of what the police would do to them if they approached them. One participant thought he may get into trouble himself, another described a fear of being hit with the police officer's

'stick'. These perceptions appeared to have been influenced by watching television programs about the police. It is possible that the participant who feared being hit by the police may have been able to put the television program into context if he had some engagement with the police on a regular basis, and was able to understand that not all encounters with the police involve someone being arrested. The image this participant holds of the police is that of an authoritarian, Vadackumchery (2000) believes that some police officer, whether consciously or unconsciously, adopt a particular ego which has an effect on the way they deal with people. This authoritarian way of behaving, whether it is conscious or not, may have an effect on an adult with learning difficulties, particularly if they are not used to engaging with the police.

One topic that arose quite regularly during the focus groups with support workers was their perception that some of the members of their groups would possibly be afraid of the police uniform; indeed, many participants during this stage stated that this could be a significant factor in adults with learning difficulties feeling afraid of the police. Miller and Hess (2007) explored the effect of the police uniform on community policing. They suggested that the uniform plays a part in a police officer's ability to gain cooperation and compliance from members of the public. It is very much a reminder that they police have authority and power. Vadackumchery (2000) takes this one step further, stating that police officers are more likely to become human rights unfriendly once they are wearing a uniform, assuming the role of an authoritarian. This image that the police convey when wearing a uniform of being a figure of authority, of power, that they will gain compliance and cooperation from members of the public could be disconcerting to some more vulnerable members of society. One participant during the second stage focus groups suggested that if the researcher had been wearing a police uniform, then not many of the adults with learning difficulties would have wanted to take part, adding that the police should come and talk to them, without uniform.

A support worker during stage one of the study described a gentleman's fear that the police will arrest him if he says or does something wrong, which corroborates the image that Miller and Hess (2007) and Vadackumchery (2000) portray, the uniform representing power and authority. Trojanowicz et al (2010) add that some members of society may view the police as uniformed strangers who could possibly hurt them, rather than somebody who would help them. Some of the participants in the focus groups echoed such views regarding the uniform, suggesting there is a definite need for the police to increase their efforts with regards to reaching all members of the community to ensure the most vulnerable are protected (Trojanowicz et al, 2010).

Some participants of the second stage focus groups described positive experiences with the police, and as such a confidence that they could approach the police in the future to report crime or incidents if necessary. This supports the suggestion once again by the Home Office (2004) that a person's perception of the police can be shaped by their first contact. The police need to be mindful of this.

Whilst a small number of participants stated they would be happy to approach the police to report crime, others spoke about a reliance on family members to call the police for them. It is claimed that some adults with learning difficulties possess limited knowledge regarding how to report such crime to the police (Gerstenfeld, 2004). It is suggested that if the police fail to organise themselves appropriately and provide sufficient information to vulnerable members of the community about how they can report hate crime, then they are allowing institutional barriers to exist (Davies, 2010).

6.8.4 Experiences of adults with learning difficulties who have reported crime to the police

A small amount of participants during the second stage focus groups, who stated they had reported crime to the police claimed they were treated well when they did so, however, some

participants suggested the police had been unhelpful during this time. Not all received a positive outcome with regards to the investigation, many of these participants told that there had been insufficient evidence to warrant further investigation.

Some participants told the researcher that they had a preference to be dealt with by a female officer, many of these had prior experience with female police officers, and this experience had been positive. Interestingly, many of the participants who stated a preference for speaking to a female officer reside within the area where a female hate crime officer regularly visits their group. This may influence their preference, as they are building a relationship with this officer, and feel comfortable.

The majority of participants during stage one of the study described frustration on their part and on the part of the adults with learning difficulties that have experienced reporting crime to the police with regards to the length of time an investigation takes. Many of the support workers described instances where a person with learning difficulties has waited up to two years for a case to make it to court, by which time their memory of the incident had significantly faded, thus resulting in them being perceived as unreliable as a witness. Participants in both stages of focus groups who had experienced reporting crime to the police suggested they had been disappointed and frustrated that they had not heard anything throughout the course of the investigation. This information appears to conflict with the claim by Stone (2008) that victims of crime who are deemed to be vulnerable adults will be provided with extra support, whether that be during the initial interview stage, between the interview and pre-trial or whilst they appear in court as a witness. Often, Stone (2008) suggests, this support is provided by a volunteer from Victim Support. It would appear that, in the cases discussed during the course of this study, Victim Support was not offered. Support workers who participated during stage one of the study suggest this may be due to confusion between the various agencies involved in a person's care. For example, the police

may assume that Social Services have informed Victim Support, whereas Social Services may assume that the police have informed them.

Hughes (2001) suggests that Social Workers are in a good position to help adults with learning difficulties and put pressure on the criminal justice system, facilitating the removal of the barriers that could prevent a person with learning difficulties from obtaining justice. It is worth noting that in the cases that participants discussed during the study where adults with learning difficulties have been able to report crime to the police, no positive input from social workers whilst their members were going through the criminal justice system were reported. Very few participants in the first stage of the study were able to describe the experiences of adults they support giving evidence in court as very few cases had reached court. None of the participants during the second stage of the study had experienced being in court. Stone (2008) suggests that it is indeed the case that victims who have learning difficulties are less likely to bring offenders to justice than people who do not have learning difficulties. The experiences described by the participants during stage one of the study might go part way to explaining this. If the vulnerable victims that these participants support are unable to retain an accurate account of events for the duration of the investigation (which has been suggested can take up to two years) until the case is heard in court, then they are going to be unable to provide an accurate recollection during a court case. If the special measures discussed by various commentators had been made available to these adults then perhaps the opportunity to record evidence at the time of the crime would have helped them give evidence once the case reached court (Home Office, 2002; Anon, 2008a; Grant et al, 2010; Murphy and Clare, 2009). One of the participants during stage one of the study raised grave concerns regarding the experience of one member during a court case. It would appear that the member she was talking about was indeed at a disadvantage because of her learning difficulties and vulnerabilities, something that Murphy and Clare (2009) believes should be taken into

consideration. The experiences described by this participant would have been traumatic for a vulnerable witness, it would be interesting to know whether any of the special measures outlined by Anon (2008a) and Murphy and Clare (2009) were in place when these cases were heard, the aim of which are to enable vulnerable adults to give their evidence in court. Participants during stage one of the study were in general agreement with the Home Office (1998) that there is a need for the identification of a vulnerable person as early as possible in an investigation so that the most appropriate level of support can be offered.

6.9 Towards understanding the experiences of adults with learning difficulties within the Criminal Justice System

Participants during stage one of the study described some experiences of adults with learning difficulties whom they support facing horrific ordeals whilst giving evidence in court. These claims would appear to disagree with claims by Murphy and Clare (2009) and Anon (2008a) that special measures are used in cases where vulnerable adults provide evidence and are at risk of being disadvantaged. No participants during stage two of the study had experiences of appearing in court, therefore further research into this phenomenon would be beneficial, this is discussed later.

6.9.1 Police Training

It is acknowledged that recognising a learning difficulty is not always an easy process. A person with a mild learning difficulty may be able to communicate easily and look after themselves independently, the level of difficulty can vary considerably (Mencap, 2012a). Participants during both stages of the study agreed the police need to engage with this section of the community in order to gain experience of learning difficulties, the strong message that the police need to spend time and take their time when dealing with individuals who have

learning difficulties in order to ensure they gain a robust understanding of their particular needs. It is suggested that regular, proactive engagement with community members who have learning difficulties would facilitate some understanding of the needs of vulnerable adults with learning difficulties and how best to deal with them.

The experiences of participants during stage two of the study would suggest that the police need to improve training in relation to recognising and dealing with learning difficulties, as some felt their treatment by the police would have improved if the police officer had been able to recognise they had a difficulty and potential vulnerability earlier in the process. It could be suggested that the lack of sufficient training in this area is an institutional barrier that prevents effective engagement, due to the police failing to improve the service it provides to this section of the community, something that concurs with claims by Nichols and Quaye (2008). Testaments about being bundled into the back of a police van because the police assumed a participant was drunk and disorderly are extremely harmful to the relationship between the two parties, and indeed to the relationship to the wider community, as peers, friends and family members may perceive they will be treated in a similar way (Clement et al, 2011).

Many of the participants during the study agreed that the attitude of the police needs to be addressed. Indeed, as previously discussed one of the participants during the second stage of the study felt that he was 'attacked by the attitude' of the police. Other participants expressed frustration that the police would speak to their support worker or carer, rather than speaking directly to them. Incidents such as this reinforce the marginalisation and social exclusion of adults with learning difficulties, and are a manifestation of the prejudice they face on a daily basis.

The opinion of many support workers on the subject of police attitude towards adults with learning difficulties was that bad attitudes reinforce the fear that many adults with learning

difficulties face with regard to the police. Many of the participants during stage two of the study spoke about being afraid of the police.

6.9.2 Photo Elicitation

As previously discussed, the photographs selected by the researcher for use in the second stage of focus groups with adults who have learning difficulties all received the approval of the professionals who participated in the first stage of the study.

During the second stage of the focus groups the photographs proved to be a good prompt for discussion, particularly surrounding the gender of the police officers and the uniform.

Some participants expressed a preference to speak to female officers, it should be noted that the majority of those who did had previous good experience with a female officer, or resided in the area which received regular visits from a female hate crime officer. These experiences and previous engagement appear to have shaped their preferences in the future.

Some participants expressed a fear of the police uniform, and a subsequent fear of the police, regardless of gender.

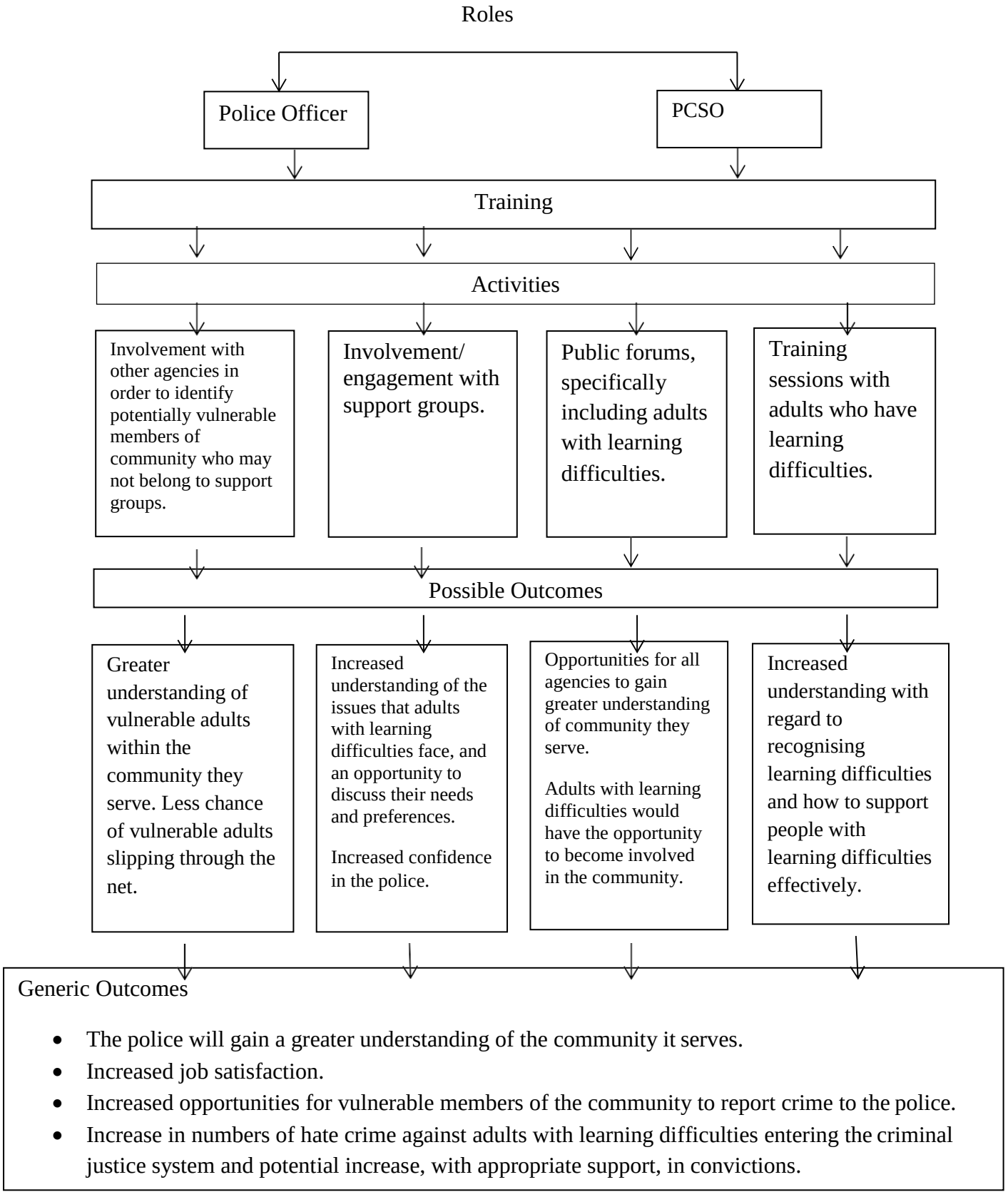
The majority of participants expressed a fear of the police dog and horse that appeared in the photographs, however, one participant who had previously stated he would not approach any police officer as he was afraid of the police suggested that he would be more than happy to approach an officer with a horse or dog, as he would feel more comfortable with the animal present.

Many participants stated they had seen images of riots on the television, and therefore had seen riot police. All participants expressed feeling afraid of these uniforms and would not consider seeking assistance from the officers shown in riot gear.

6.9.3 Proposed engagement model

The findings from this research study provided many suggestions for the improvement of the engagement process between the police and adults with learning difficulties. The literature review found no evidence of an engagement model that provides a clear plan of activities and outcomes in relation to this section of the community. Figure 8 overleaf outlines the proposed model.

Figure 8: Proposed Engagement Model.



(Milliner, 2014)

The first stage in this model is important, and fundamental to the remaining stages. The process of training police officers and PCSO is necessary to ensure they are equipped with appropriate skills to engage all. The researcher recommends that adults with learning difficulties are included in the training programme as they can provide information about their needs and preferences, and provide vital guidance as to dealing with learning difficulties. Some participants in this research study have experience taking part in diversity training, and welcome the opportunity to be included in this process once again. This step, will provide some reassurance to this section of the community that the police are taking the engagement process seriously, and working towards breaking down the barriers that have prevented understanding and engagement.

Another key stage in this model is the effective identification of potentially vulnerable members of the community. It is vital the police engage with other agencies, such as Social Services, Local Health Board, Victim Support in order to achieve a greater, holistic understanding of the community it serves. Adaptation of the model may be required in respect of individual involvement, however, it is maintained that the principles posed remain valid. So, effective training, communication and information sharing with other agencies will provide the police with a greater understanding of the potentially vulnerable members of the community, the next stage is to engage these members of the community in order to gain an understanding of the issues faced. It is suggested that this function can be performed with regular face to face contact with support groups for example. This can be carried out by a PCSO if necessary, as they are equipped with sufficient skills to engage community members in order to ensure all members of the community are provided with support.

It is also recommended in this model that the police organise specific public forums within neighbourhoods for adults with learning difficulties to attend. The forum could be based on a similar principle to the current PACT (Partners and Communities Together) meetings that

already take place. These forums would provide adults with learning difficulties the opportunity to feel included in the community and a feeling that their needs and priorities are worthy of review by the police and partners. It is acknowledged that whilst adults with learning difficulties are able to attend the regular PACT meetings alongside other community members, if they feel able to, it may be appropriate for the police and partners to provide some meetings exclusively or adults with learning difficulties to ensure that the meetings are tailored to their needs, possibly holding the meeting in a familiar venue, at a time that would suit. For example, the researcher in this study held the focus groups in a familiar venue, during the time when the groups regularly meet. If the police chose this time, they would be able to reach many potentially vulnerable people, and bringing the meeting to them would break down barriers.

The final activity that this model proposes is an increase in the involvement in adults with learning difficulties in the training of police officers. It has been suggested that learning difficulties can be difficult to recognise, particularly if the difficulty is mild (Gillen, 2009), and that an insufficient number of police officers receive training in how to recognise learning difficulties and effectively support a person who has a difficulty. It is proposed that the greatest way to facilitate understanding with regard to learning difficulties is to allow adults with learning difficulties themselves to become actively involved in police training.

It is suggested that the proposed engagement model provides a pragmatic and logical approach to the engagement process between the police and adults with learning difficulties. It can also assist professionals within the police service who are not predisposed to engagement to understand the value of good quality engagement.

Chapter Seven

Concluding Remarks

7.1 Introduction

This chapter provides some final conclusions and recommendations in terms of the future progression of the engagement process between the police and this potentially vulnerable section of our communities in South Wales. An outline of the original contribution to existing knowledge and suggestions for future research will be provided. The research study as a journey will also be reflected upon.

The study began with a thorough literature review which identified three key issues. Firstly that adult with learning difficulties are more likely to experience hate crime and disability hate crime on a regular basis. Secondly these hate crimes often go unreported, and finally, of those that are reported to the police, very few make it to court and very few result in a conviction. With these issues at the forefront of this research, the aim was to discover whether incidents of hate crime are regularly experienced by adults with learning difficulties across South Wales, and whether these adults have a relationship or engagement with the police that would facilitate the reporting of such incidents.

The vast majority of participants stated that they experience hate crime, and that many of them experience it daily. With regards to the reporting of such incidents/crime the majority of participants do not report crimes to the police, choosing alternative coping mechanisms instead, such as adapting and altering how they live their lives in order to avoid further incidents. Two areas within South Wales report that they have regular contact with hate

crime officers or a PCSO, which has increased confidence amongst the participants who reside within these, as they have developed a relationship that enables these community members to talk about issues and report issues to the police. A good working relationship has also formed between the professional support workers and the police, which again opens up the channels of communication. If support workers feel there are problems or incidents happening, they have a good relationship with the local officer, and are able to communicate their concerns easily.

Very few of the participants stated that they had reported crimes to the police, some of those who had reported issues to the police suggested that the case was not investigated, often due to lack of evidence.

In relation to the aims and objectives of this study, as far as practicable these aims have been met, as insight into the issues and perspectives of adults with learning difficulties in South Wales identified during the literature review have been discovered.

7.2 Original Contribution to Knowledge

Community policing and engaging with all sections of our communities continues to be an obligation placed upon the police by the government, indeed the government envisage a 'Big Society' (BBC News, 2010; Conservative government, 2010) where all adults will be actively encouraged to become involved in policing. It is acknowledged that some members of the community will be more difficult to reach and engage than others.

This study has undertaken an analysis of the experiences of groups of adults with learning difficulties across South Wales along with the views and perceptions of professional support workers who work with adults who have learning difficulties on a daily basis. The findings

of this study would indicate that the issues identified during the literature review are indeed prevalent amongst the community of participants who took part in the study, the majority of whom are reluctant to approach the police to report crimes/incidents. Whilst this section of the community, on the whole, discussed a desire to engage with the police there appears to remain a barrier which prevents the majority from approaching the police.

The original contribution to knowledge offered relates to two areas. Firstly, it has enabled a deeper understanding of the real nature of police and community engagement, specifically from the perspective of those in the community who have learning difficulties, something that has not been explored before. Secondly, it provides recommendations regarding improvements to future engagement along with the development of an engagement model that could be used by the police and/or other organisations if appropriate adjustments are made. It is suggested that the police need to take proactive, positive steps to engage this section of the community, in order to get to know them, their needs and preferences. Only through this type of engagement, can we ensure that this section of the community are socially included, protected and provided equal opportunities to access help. The engagement model provides simple steps that the police, and indeed other organisations, can follow to ensure they are able to capture all potentially vulnerable people within their new, proactive engagement activities.

Any original contribution to knowledge will be accompanied by a flourish of new ideas and arguments, along with the opportunity to apply existing ideas, discovered during the review of literature, to the new area of study. This is important, as the issues faced by adults with learning difficulties and their engagement with the police and any new ideas will be cause for discussion, and allow past discussions to be revisited. This is equally important in the development of the proposed engagement model as debates and discussion allow the model to adapt and grow.

7.3 Recommendations for the future progression of engagement with adults who have learning difficulties

The findings from both stage one and two of the study were combined and analysis of the data carried out, a discussion of this took place in chapter six. Participants of both stage one and stage two focus groups were asked to provide their suggestions for ways in which the engagement process between the police and adults with learning difficulties could move forward and improve sufficiently for these adults to feel able to report hate crime and issues.

These suggestions along with the key emerging themes that arose from the data have been combined to provide the following recommendations in the hope that with their implementation improvements can be made to the engagement process in the future.

7.3.1 Increased engagement with adults who have learning difficulties

There was a general agreement between all participants of stage one of the study, that there are barriers between the police and adults with learning difficulties that they support, these feelings are supported by Davies (2010). The majority of support workers acknowledged that whilst it can be difficult to reach and engage adults with learning difficulties, that the police could be more proactive, and they could take positive steps towards breaking down the barriers. The support workers agreed with Davies (2010) that it is extremely important that the police remove the environmental, attitudinal and institutional barriers that can make a person with learning difficulties feel more vulnerable and more disabled. The police, as an organisation, needs to organise itself more appropriately in order to engage effectively and remove barriers to allow this engagement. This is an important process if adults with learning difficulties are to be empowered and socially included (Centre for Inclusive

Learning Support, 2012). Members of the 'People First' organisation meet regularly for support, therefore there are opportunities available to local police officers or PCSO to call in and make initial contact, something that would fall within the remit of a PCSO (South Wales, 2014).

It must be remembered that it is not only the support workers and adults with learning difficulties who participated in this research who desire effective engagement, but it is a statutory obligation and responsibility placed upon the police by the government, a requirement to engage with all sections of our communities, even those deemed to be more 'hard to reach' and marginalised to discover their needs and priorities (Crawford et al, 2005; Gillen, 2009; Home Office, 2004).

As discussed, many of the participants during stage two of the study also expressed a desire to partake in regular engagement with the police, a willingness to share their concerns and talk to the police about issues they face. Some participants during this stage of the focus groups reflected upon past experiences where they have been included in forms of diversity training with the police, and were able to assist in somewhat educating police officers regarding learning difficulties, such involvement does not take place at present, however, all participants welcomed a continuation of such training along with regular contact with the police.

7.3.2 Improvements to police training

During the first stage of the study support workers discussed their belief that the police are not good at recognising learning difficulties, particularly if the difficulty is mild and not obvious. As a result they suggest that improvements to police training are necessary in order to help police officers identify these vulnerable members of the community so that they are able to provide the most appropriate service and support to the individual, whether that

person requires their service as a victim, witness or suspect. The general view of participants in this study is that the police lack sufficient knowledge regarding learning difficulties and a commitment from the police to learn more about the needs of these potentially vulnerable members of the community would go some way to breaking down barriers that prevent adults with learning difficulties from accessing the criminal justice system. Participants during the first stage of the study echoed an acknowledgment by the Home Office (1998) that the police need to recognise vulnerable victims, witnesses and suspects at the earliest opportunity in an investigation in order to be able to provide the most appropriate support during the criminal justice process.

Davies (2010) suggest that the police need to pay particular attention to breaking down the institutional barriers that are preventing adequate engagement with vulnerable adults. Davies (2010) provides an example of such an institutional barrier, where perhaps the police fail to organise itself appropriately and provide adequate information to vulnerable adults regarding how they can report hate crime.

It is important that the police address this issue, as it could be suggested that failure to do so means they may support the medical model of disability because they are discriminating against disabled people and excluding them from participating in society (Centre for Inclusive Learning Support, 2012).

These views expressed by participants of both stages during the study agree with Fraser (2010), Gillen (2009) and Burton et al (2006) who agree that traditionally the police are not good at recognising learning difficulties. Gillen (2009) and Burton et al (2006) suggest that not only are the police receiving insufficient training with regards to recognising learning difficulties, but also the training they receive in how to deal with and communicate with a vulnerable person who has a learning difficulty is poor. Mencap (2012b) suggest that

recognising a learning difficulty can be a complex process, as learning difficulties vary considerably.

In addition to an improvement in police training with regards to learning difficulties, it is suggested by Giannasi (2010) that the police need to improve the training with regards to understanding the difference between an incident and a crime so that the most appropriate action can be taken, describing a need for the police to effectively link separate incidents in order to obtain a clear picture of what is occurring.

Suggestions from participants of both stage one and stage two focus groups are that generally the individual needs and communication skills of each person with learning difficulties will differ, therefore it is advised that the police take time getting to know each person, whether they be a victim, witness or suspect, in order to assess their individual needs and determine how best to communicate with them, something that the Home Office (2004) endorse.

Many participants during the stage one focus groups voiced strong opinions regarding the general attitude of police officers. Their experiences of the police suggest that their general attitude can be harsh and abrupt, expressing concern that if they felt intimidated by police officers then members of their groups that they support would be more so. These support workers generally believed that the poor attitude of some police officers is, in part, due to poor training with regards to community engagement.

A participant during the first stage of the study described frustration that a vital opportunity for members of her group to engage with the police during their diversity training resulted in her and members who participated feeling like the police didn't value the experience. She described a belief that some police officers didn't appear to want to go through the training, displaying disinterest that discouraged her members from taking part. This participant spoke of the importance of such training, and the involvement of adults with learning difficulties in

the process, stating that the police would not know how to deal with this section of the community if they don't first learn from them.

It would appear that the vast majority of all participants would agree with Gillen (2009) and Burton et al (2006) that insufficient numbers of officers receive the necessary specialist training that they need in order to engage with vulnerable members of the community. Participants during the first stage of the study described a concern that agencies involved in the care of adults with learning difficulties appear to lack understanding as to what other agencies are doing, or have done. An example of which was provided by one support worker who was concerned that an adult she supports who became a victim of crime was not offered vital victim support, it appeared that various agencies had believed that the other agency possessed the responsibility for offering such support. This supports a suggestion by Rogers and Lewis (2007) that the police need to have a greater understanding of the role of other agencies. All agencies involved in the care of the vulnerable adult need to develop and improve the process of information sharing (Giannasi, 2010). Participants during the first part of the study suggested that a more holistic approach would be beneficial when dealing with a vulnerable adult, concurring with Lander (2010) and the suggestion that a holistic assessment would provide a more robust and open relationship between agencies which would facilitate more appropriate sharing of information as suggested by Fraser (2010).

7.3.3 Visible Presence of Police Officers

Many participants during the second stage of the study discussed a desire to see more police officers patrolling in their areas. They described a feeling that they would feel much safer. This has become increasingly difficult to deliver as a reduction in numbers of police officers has occurred in recent years, as previously discussed. There appears to be an expectation for the police to do more for less (Innes 2010). It is suggested that this gap in the provision of

services may need to be filled with greater citizen participation, or the 'Big Society' approach (Innes, 2010; Gravelle and Rogers, 2010). Whilst considering the concept of citizen participation, it is worth giving thought to where adults with learning difficulties will find themselves positioned in this notion. If their participation is dismissed then they are being excluded and further marginalised.

7.3.4 Improvements to experiences of adults with learning difficulties within the Criminal Justice System

None of the participants who took part in the second stage of the focus groups had any experience within court. However, the professionals who took part during the first stage of the process were able to relay some cases that they had witnessed, where adults with learning difficulties had gone through unpleasant experiences with regard to giving evidence in court. The review of the literature described a variety of special measures that are to be made available to vulnerable adults. It would appear these had not been taken advantage of on the occasions discussed.

7.3.5 Increase education regarding hate crime

It would appear that significant improvements need to occur with regard to the provision of education around the topic of hate crime to potentially vulnerable people who may suffer such crime, for example adults with learning difficulties who are highly likely to experience hate crime (The Disability Rights Commission, 2007).

7.3.6 Improved partnership/agency working – more effective information sharing

The value of effective partnership/agency working was explored to some extent in the review of the literature. Certainly, it was felt that with regards to the identification of vulnerable victims and the provision of further, necessary support there are failings.

7.4 Commenting on the difficulties of engaging 'hard to reach' members of our community.

Findings from this study confirm that the engagement of adults with learning difficulties in the South Wales area can be challenging. There are no quick-fix answers to the dilemmas that face the police who are seeking and obliged to engage all sections of the community. For example, adults with learning difficulties who took part in this study hold differing views regarding the value of engaging with the police. The general view is that adults with learning difficulties want to positively engage with the police, however, there is a reluctance to approach the police themselves.

7.5 Potential for future research

Research studies such as this inevitable leave unanswered questions or uncover avenues that may provide opportunities for potential further research (Dunleavy, 2003). Whilst it is felt that this study has identified areas for improvements and recommendations for the future progression of police and community engagement, specifically with vulnerable members of our communities, there remain a number of areas that require further enquiry.

Firstly, the review of the literature suggested that few adults with learning difficulties report hate crime to the police, opting instead to try to ignore it, or adapt their lives around it, or

simply accepting it. This study corroborates such claims, however, some areas of good practice have been identified where police officers are building good relationships with vulnerable adults, therefore it may be asked why these adults are not reporting crime to the police still, despite some participants expressing a willingness to talk to these officers.

It is suggested that the recognition and recording of hate crime needs to be examined. It may be the case that adults with learning difficulties are reporting incidents and crimes but the police are failing to recognise and record them properly, therefore figures of hate crime will be misleading. It is suggested that research could be undertaken into the challenges surrounding the recognition and recording of hate crime, as this could benefit vulnerable adults in the future if the police are able to act more appropriately to their needs. A more accurate picture of the phenomenon that is 'hate crime' is much needed.

Secondly, one of the recommendations that this research study produced was the requirement for improvements to police training, particularly with regard to the recognition of learning difficulties, which can be very difficult if the difficulty is mild. With adequate training the police may feel more confident, not only recognising a learning difficulty, but also with improved communication skills and tools they would be able to provide effective support to vulnerable victims, witnesses and suspects.

Therefore, it is suggested that research should take place which explores the training provision with regards to dealing with vulnerable members of our society, as it currently stands. It is hoped that speaking to police officers and gaining a deeper understanding of the training they receive that ways in which this training could be improved will be identified and recommendations presented. It would be extremely interesting to explore this subject from the perspective of police officers, who are facing daily challenges of policing a diverse society.

Thirdly, one of the original contributions to the existing body of knowledge was the development of an engagement model, which could be used by police organisations to ensure effective engagement with vulnerable groups. It is suggested that further research could be necessary to test whether this model is appropriate and effective and to ascertain the value of this model and whether modifications are necessary.

Fourthly, this study identified that many of the participants during the second stage of the study had limited or no knowledge of what hate crime is. It is suggested that this may, in part, explain the under-reporting of hate crime amongst adults with learning difficulties. Often incidents and crime are accepted as part of life. It is suggested that research into education provision regarding hate crime is explored in more detail. The researcher would like to discover what information is available to adults with learning difficulties, and whether the information available is adequate.

Also, as many of the incidents discussed by participants during stage one of the study involved school children taunting and verbally abusing adults with learning difficulties whilst on public transport. There is a need to review the education of young people in schools to assess what information they receive regarding hate crime. Some of the participants during the stage one of the study discussed an initiative where members of the group would attend schools to provide education regarding learning difficulties and the effects of hate crime. This initiative is available to schools, however, there are difficulties obtaining agreement from some schools for this intervention to take place. Further research into this may be beneficial if future offenders are to be educated prior to committing hate crime offences.

Finally, the researcher in this particular study was fortunate to have the cooperation of members of ‘People First’ organisation who were happy and willing for the research to be carried out within their groups. This made the process of accessing groups who have learning

difficulties reasonably straightforward. It is suggested that adults who have learning difficulties, who are potentially vulnerable, who do not belong to such an organisation are at risk of slipping through the net, and not being provided with much needed support. Recommendations have been made that the police increase engagement with vulnerable members of society, and a quick, easy way to achieve this is to approach groups such as 'People First' who would actively welcome engagement. The researcher would like to explore the most effective ways in which the police can engage with adults who are not members of such groups. A true picture of the support networks and agencies involved with vulnerable groups is necessary in order to ensure all members of society are reached.

7.6 Evaluating the research journey

This section of the chapter will provide some insight into the research journey and some of the difficulties encountered, and lessons learned along the way.

Access to participants was a relatively easy part of the process; as once the research topic had been explained to potential participants there was an overwhelming level of support in return as participants felt that this was a worthwhile subject to explore and many participants strongly expressed that they wanted to view their opinions.

One of the largest dilemmas the researcher faced was the choice between the use of individual interviews or focus groups. During the initial research one to one interviews took place and upon reflection the researcher felt that participants would feel more comfortable in a focus group setting, where they had the support of their peers and support worker. To ensure the best decision was made with regard to this the researcher consulted all participants

to ascertain their preference. All participants expressed a desire to take part in the research within a focus group setting.

If this research study were to be described in one sentence, the most appropriate choice of words for such a description would be "A humbling experience that, whilst being extremely challenging at times, was worthwhile as the stories and experiences of participants deserve to be heard by someone".

7.7 Publications as a Result of Research

The topic of this research has proven to be of interest to many parties within the academic arena, resulting in two publications in the Police Professional journal. The references for these publications are:

Rogers, C. and Milliner, A. (2010). Ladders of Engagement. Police Professional. 28th October 2010.

Milliner, A. (2014) Hard to Reach Groups, in Gravelle, J., and Rogers, C. (Eds). *Researching the Police in the 21st Century. International Lessons from the Field.* Hampshire, Palgrave Macmillan.

Milliner, A. and Rogers, C. (2011). Marginalised Groups: Barriers to Engaging in the Big Society. Police Professional. 27th January 2011.

South Wales Police have also expressed an interest in reading the findings upon completion of the study (See Appendix I).

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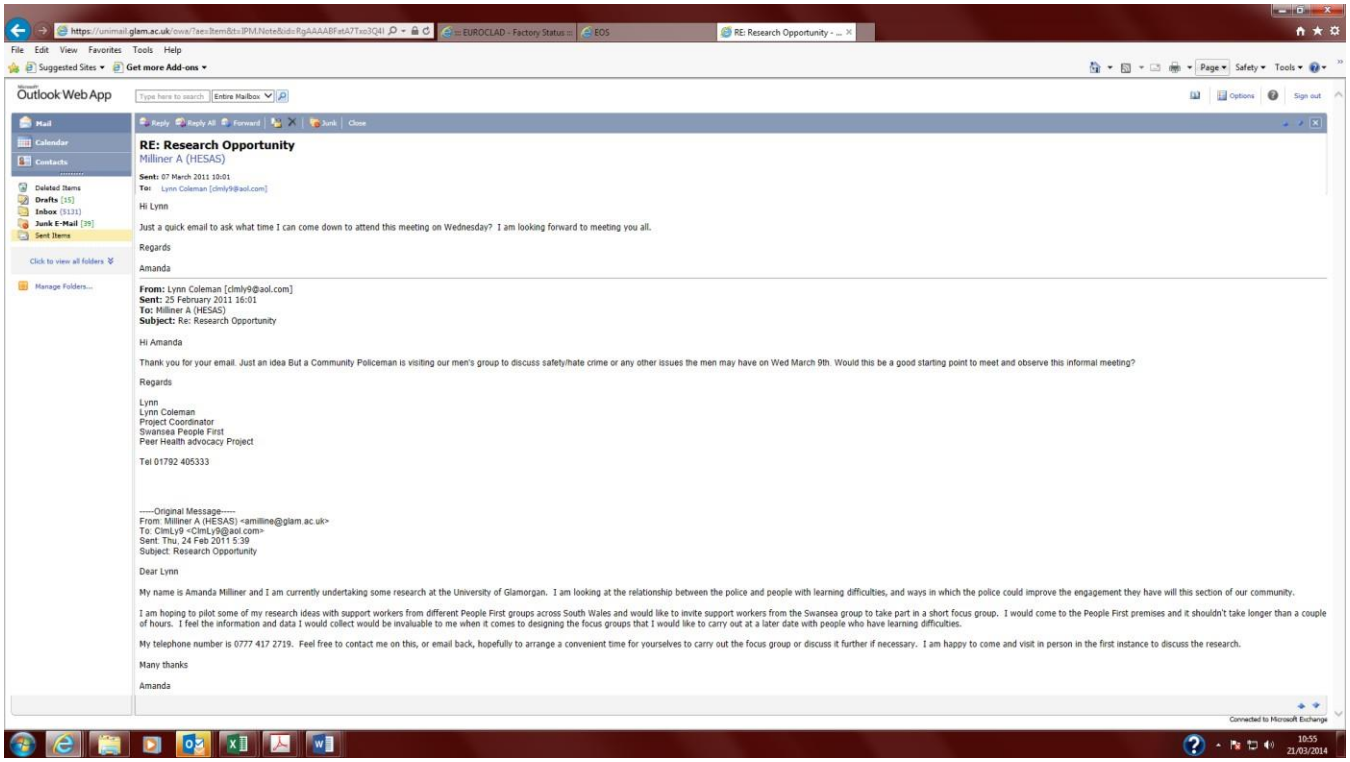
Appendix A

Appendix A provides examples of emails/correspondence between the People First groups across South Wales. Much relationship building occurred during the preparation of the focus groups.



RE: Research Opportunity

Milliner A (HESAS)

Sent: 07 March 2011 10:01
To: Lynn Coleman [clmly9@aol.com]

Hi Lynn

Just a quick email to ask what time I can come down to attend this meeting on Wednesday? I am looking forward to meeting you all.

Regards

Amanda

From: Lynn Coleman [clmly9@aol.com]
Sent: 25 February 2011 16:01
To: Milliner A (HESAS)
Subject: Re: Research Opportunity

Hi Amanda

Thank you for your email. Just an idea But a Community Policeman is visiting our men's group to discuss safety/hate crime or any other issues the men may have on Wed March 9th. Would this be a good starting point to meet and observe this informal meeting?

Regards

Lynn
Lynn Coleman
Project Coordinator
Swansea People First
Peer Health advocacy Project

Tel 01792 405333

-----Original Message-----
From: Milliner A (HESAS) <amilline@glam.ac.uk>
To: ClmLy9 <ClmLy9@aol.com>
Sent: Thu, 24 Feb 2011 5:39
Subject: Research Opportunity

Dear Lynn

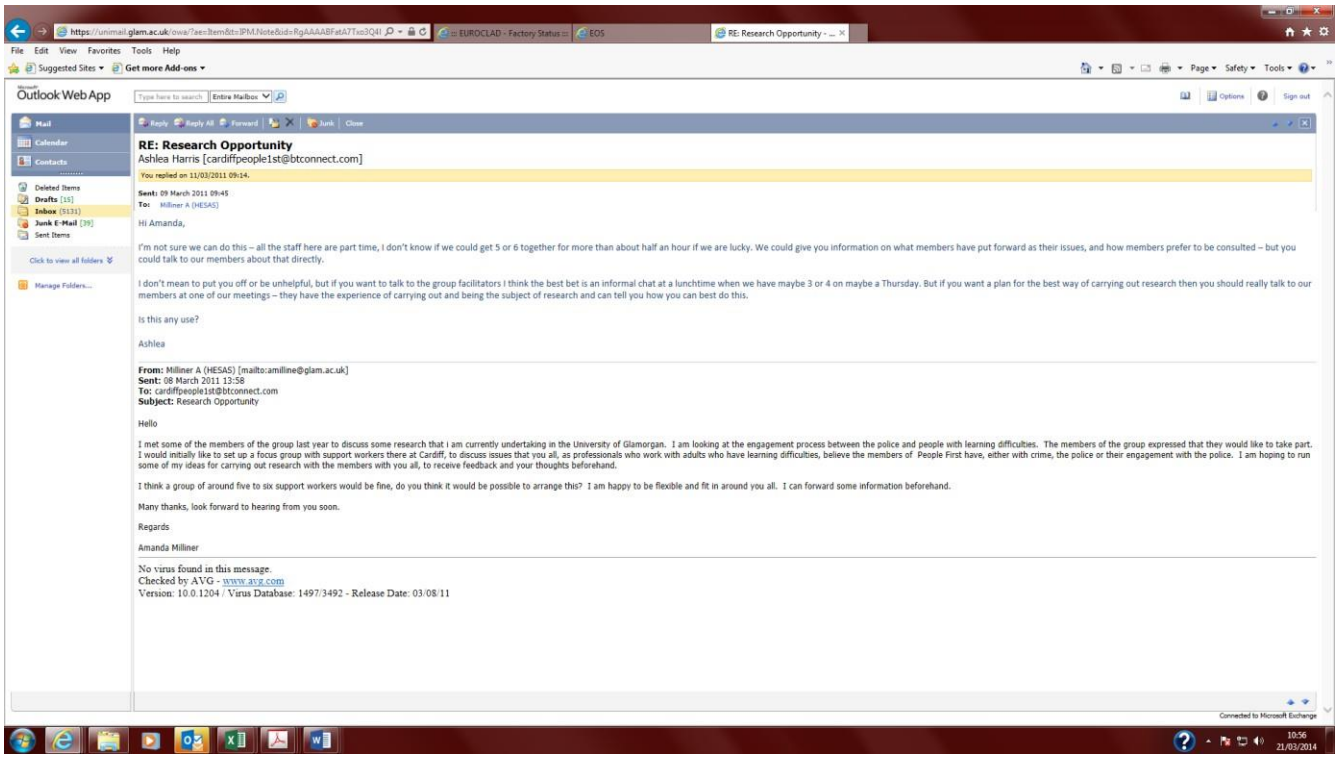
My name is Amanda Milliner and I am currently undertaking some research at the University of Glamorgan. I am looking at the relationship between the police and people with learning difficulties, and ways in which the police could improve the engagement they have will this section of our community.

I am hoping to pilot some of my research ideas with support workers from different People First groups across South Wales and would like to invite support workers from the Swansea group to take part in a short focus group. I would come to the People First premises and it shouldn't take longer than a couple of hours. I feel the information and data I would collect would be invaluable to me when it comes to designing the focus groups that I would like to carry out at a later date with people who have learning difficulties.

My telephone number is 0777 417 2719. Feel free to contact me on this, or email back, hopefully to arrange a convenient time for yourselves to carry out the focus group or discuss it further if necessary. I am happy to come and visit in person in the first instance to discuss the research.

Many thanks

Amanda


Outlook Web App
RE: Research Opportunity
Ashlea Harris [cardiffpeople1st@btconnect.com]
You replied on 11/03/2011 09:14.
Sent: 09 March 2011 09:45
To: Milliner A (HESAS)
Hi Amanda,
I'm not sure we can do this – all the staff here are part time, I don't know if we could get 5 or 6 together for more than about half an hour if we are lucky. We could give you information on what members have put forward as their issues, and how members prefer to be consulted – but you could talk to our members about that directly.
I don't mean to put you off or be unhelpful, but if you want to talk to the group facilitators I think the best bet is an informal chat at a lunchtime when we have maybe 3 or 4 on maybe a Thursday. But if you want a plan for the best way of carrying out research then you should really talk to our members at one of our meetings – they have the experience of carrying out and being the subject of research and can tell you how you can best do this.
Is this any use?
Ashlea
From: Milliner A (HESAS) [mailto:amilline@glam.ac.uk]
Sent: 08 March 2011 13:58
To: cardiffpeople1st@btconnect.com
Subject: Research Opportunity
Hello
I met some of the members of the group last year to discuss some research that i am currently undertaking in the University of Glamorgan. I am looking at the engagement process between the police and people with learning difficulties. The members of the group expressed that they would like to take part. I would initially like to set up a focus group with support workers there at Cardiff, to discuss issues that you all, as professionals who work with adults who have learning difficulties, believe the members of People First have, either with crime, the police or their engagement with the police. I am hoping to run some of my ideas for carrying out research with the members with you all, to receive feedback and your thoughts beforehand.
I think a group of around five to six support workers would be fine, do you think it would be possible to arrange this? I am happy to be flexible and fit in around you all. I can forward some information beforehand.
Many thanks, look forward to hearing from you soon.
Regards
Amanda Milliner
No virus found in this message.
Checked by AVG - www.avg.com
Version: 10.0.1204 / Virus Database: 1497/3492 - Release Date: 03/08/11

Appendix B

University of Glamorgan

Centre for Police Sciences

Participant Information Sheet.

Research project title:

Methods of improving engagement between the police and adults with learning difficulties.

You have been asked to take part in research being undertaken by Amanda Milliner, University of Glamorgan. This sheet will provide you with information about the research so that you can decide whether you would like to take part. Please take time to read this information carefully and if anything needs to be clarified discuss it with the researcher. Thank you for your time.

What is the purpose of the research?

The purpose of this research is to discover the most appropriate methods of improving engagement between the police and adults with learning difficulties.

Why have I been invited to take part in the research?

The research is being undertaken in four areas within South Wales:

- Rhondda Cynon Taf
- Cardiff
- Swansea
- Vale of Glamorgan

From each of these areas focus groups will take place with professionals who have experience working with adults who have learning difficulties. It is aimed that approximately six support workers will be asked to take part from each area.

Do I have to take part?

No, you are under no obligation to take part in the research. There are no penalties involved if you do not want to.

What will happen to me if I do take part?

If you decide to take part, and you have read the participant information sheet you will be invited to read and sign a consent form. If at any stage through the process you decide you do not want to take part any more, your consent can be withdrawn without any question, and without you having to give an explanation.

What do I have to do?

You will be invited to attend a focus group with other professionals from your organisation, where discussions will take place. The time scale for the focus group will be approximately one hour.

What are the possible risks or disadvantages of taking part in the research?

The discussions will surround the area of police consultation/engagement with adults who have learning difficulties. This will involve you discussing situations you have experienced within your role in the organisation, this may cause you to feel distress or discomfort. If at any time through the focus group you want to refuse to answer a question or withdraw from the group completely, you may do so.

What are the possible benefits of taking part in the research?
There will be no direct benefit to you personally for taking part in the research. It is hoped, however, that the valuable information you share could help to develop an appropriate way in which to find out how adults with learning difficulties can best be engaged in consultation by the police.

What if there is a problem?
If you have any concerns regarding the research, please speak to Amanda Milliner or any other person within the research team who will try to answer your questions:

Mrs Amanda Milliner - 01443 483085/0777 417 2719
Dr Colin Rogers – 01443 654260
Mr Brian Blakemore – 01443 482288
Mr Tim Read – 01443 483326

If you have any reason to complain formally, please contact the University of Glamorgan Quality Unit:

The Quality Unit
Academic Registry
University of Glamorgan
1 Llantwit Road
Treforest
CF37 1DL
01443 480480

Will the information I give be confidential?
All information provided will be kept strictly confidential, every effort will be made to ensure that participants will not be identifiable in the research project. It is proposed that pseudonyms are used for the locations and participants. The organisation name 'People First' will remain confidential to prevent you being identified through a process of elimination/deduction. However, participants will be informed that if the disclosure of information requires follow up action of any kind then this would be undertaken.

All data gathered will be stored safely and securely, only the research team will have access to it. All electronic data that is gathered will be stored on a secured server, which is always password protected. Hard data will be kept in a locked filing cabinet, in a locked office. Under no circumstances will specific personal data such as names or addresses be stored, as all data will be sanitised at source.

In the event that someone, during a focus group disclosed something that the principal investigator considers to need follow up action, for instance if a person admitted to a criminal act, then advice would be sought in the first instance from the supervisor. It may be a case that this information would need to be disclosed to the appropriate authorities.

What will happen to the results of the research project?
The data gathered will be analysed by Amanda Milliner, and as it is being gathered as part of a Postgraduate research degree a report will be written discussing the findings. No personal information will appear in this report.

Who is sponsoring and organising the research?
The research is being undertaken by Amanda Milliner for a Postgraduate research degree. The project is being supervised by Dr Colin Rogers, Mr Brian Blakemore and Mr Tim Read.

Who has reviewed the research project?
The University of Glamorgan ethics committee have reviewed this research project.

If you have any questions or further information about the research is needed, please feel free to contact Amanda Milliner on 01443 483085/0777 417 2719 or by email – amilline@glam.ac.uk.

Thank you for reading this information sheet and considering taking part in this research project.

Appendix C

University of Glamorgan

Centre for Police Sciences

Consent Form for Participants.

Research Project Title:

Methods of improving engagement between the police and adults with learning difficulties.

I agree to take part in the research undertaken by Amanda Milliner for the Faculty of Health, Sport and Science (University of Glamorgan). The purpose of the research has been explained to me, and I have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet. I understand that agreeing to take part in the research means that I am agreeing to:

- Take part in a focus group organised by Amanda Milliner.

Data Protection:

Information provided during the focus groups/interviews will be stored and analysed for the following purposes:

- To be used by Amanda Milliner to complete a Postgraduate research degree.
- To be used in possible future publications.
- To discover the most appropriate ways in which to obtain data from adults with learning difficulties.

I understand that all information provided during the focus group is confidential, and that no information will be disclosed in any reports/publications or to any other party that may lead to any individual being identified. No personal data will be published. No identifiable data will be shared with any other organisations. I understand that pseudonyms will be used for myself and the location that the focus group took place in order to ensure confidentiality.

I agree to the University of Glamorgan recording and processing information about me. This information will only be used for the purposes described earlier and my consent is conditional on the researcher complying with their duties and obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998.

I understand that in the event of a matter being disclosed that needed follow up action, for instance, if a criminal act is discussed. The principal investigator will need to seek advice from the supervisor and this matter may be disclosed to the appropriate authorities.

Withdrawal from the research:

I understand that my participation in the research is on a voluntary basis. I can chose at any time not to participate in all or part of the research. I can withdraw from the process at any time without being disadvantaged or penalised in any way.

Further publication or analysis:
I consent to any data I have contributed to the research being used in ethically approved further analysis, future publications, or future research that is undertaken by Amanda Milliner, The University of Glamorgan or the Centre for Police Sciences.

Please tick to confirm:

I confirm that I have read and understood the Patient Information Sheet and the Participant Consent Form provided by Amanda Milliner for the above research. ☐

I confirm that I have been given time to consider the information provided, and been given time to ask questions regarding the research, which have been answered satisfactorily. ☐

I understand that my participation in the research is on a voluntary basis and that I am able to withdraw my consent at any time, without giving a reason, without detriment to me. ☐

By signing below I am agreeing to participate in the research: How can we better understand the consultation process between the police and adults with learning difficulties?

Participant:

Name……

Signature……..Date…….

Witness to participants informed and voluntary consent:

I hereby believe that…..... has been provided with information regarding the research and believe that they understand the project and gives his/her consent voluntarily.

Name……

Signature……..Date…….

Appendix D

Reflective Journal

In an attempt to bracket my own personal views and opinions with regard to the experiences of people with learning difficulties I decided to write a reflective journal prior to commencing the focus groups. The purpose for this journal is to enable me to recognise and acknowledge my personal opinions, beliefs and feelings so that I am able to gather data from participants of the study with an open mind. Whilst I understand that this will be difficult, I believe capturing my preconceptions will enable me to approach this study with the eyes of a 'stranger'.

I have experience engaging adults who have learning difficulties during my time as an undergraduate student at the University of South Wales. Discussions were held with regard to their experiences of hate crime. Many of the people I talked to were unwilling to approach the police, some described experiences of speaking to the police but not being taken seriously. These accounts are indeed the reason why I considered this topic worthy of research.

I also have experience studying the police, and the subject of engagement has arisen many times. I therefore have opinions as to what engagement should look like. Indeed I have needed to engage the police myself on occasion.

I have experience working with the police, as a volunteer, with the specific aim of encouraging and improving relations between local residents and students of the University.

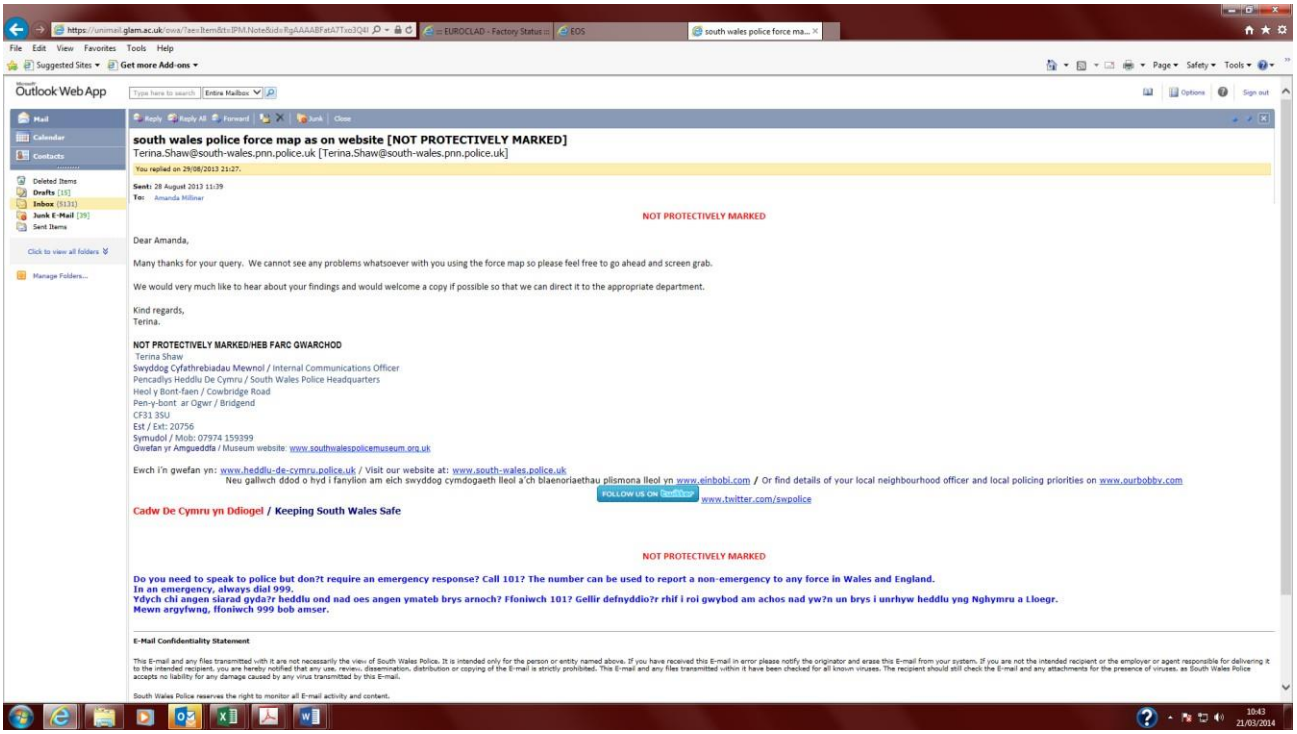
These experiences provided me with the opinion that adults who have learning difficulties are in great need of engagement with the police, as they are potentially vulnerable targets of crime. I am also sceptical as to whether the police would view such engagement as a priority, as this section of the community may be more difficult to reach. As a member of the public I

was able to call the police and seek assistance when I needed it. The police responded in a timely manner and my experience was positive. My personal view is that seeking help if you have an intellectual difficulty may not be as easy.

I remain a believer that effective engagement can take place if all parties involved are willing to engage.

Appendix I

Appendix I provides correspondence with South Wales Police regarding use of the area map. Expression of interest from South Wales Police about receiving a copy of the research to disseminate to appropriate department is also evidenced here.



Outlook Web App

south wales police force map as on website [NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED]

Terina.Shaw@south-wales.pnn.police.uk [Terina.Shaw@south-wales.pnn.police.uk]

You replied on 29/08/2013 21:27.

Sent: 28 August 2013 11:39

To: Amanda Millmar

NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED

Dear Amanda,

Many thanks for your query. We cannot see any problems whatsoever with you using the force map so please feel free to go ahead and screen grab.

We would very much like to hear about your findings and would welcome a copy if possible so that we can direct it to the appropriate department.

Kind regards,
Terina.

NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED/HEB FARC GWARCHOD

Terina Shaw
Swyddog Cyfathrebiadau Mewnol / Internal Communications Officer
Pencadlys Heddlu De Cymru / South Wales Police Headquarters
Heol y Bont-faen / Cowbridge Road
Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr / Bridgend
CF31 3SU
Est / Ext: 20756
Symudol / Mob: 07974 159399
Gwefan yr Amgueddfa / Museum website: www.southwalespolicemuseum.org.uk

Ewch i'n gwefan yn: www.heddlu-de-cymru.police.uk / Visit our website at: www.south-wales.police.uk
Neu gallwch ddod o hyd i fanylion am eich swyddog cymdogaeth lleol a'ch blaenoriaethau plismona lleol yn www.einbobi.com / Or find details of your local neighbourhood officer and local policing priorities on www.ourbobby.com
www.twitter.com/swpolice

Cadw De Cymru yn Ddiogel / Keeping South Wales Safe

NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED

Do you need to speak to police but don?t require an emergency response? Call 101? The number can be used to report a non-emergency to any force in Wales and England.
In an emergency, always dial 999.
Ydych chi angen siarad gyda?r heddlu ond nad oes angen ymateb brys arnoch? Ffoniwch 101? Gellir defnyddio?r rhif i roi gwybod am achos nad yw?n un brys i unrhyw heddlu yng Nghymru a Lloegr.
Mewn argyfwng, ffoniwch 999 bob amser.

E-Mail Confidentiality Statement

This E-mail and any files transmitted with it are not necessarily the view of South Wales Police. It is intended only for the person or entity named above. If you have received this E-mail in error please notify the originator and erase this E-mail from your system. If you are not the intended recipient or the employer or agent responsible for delivering it to the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that any use, review, dissemination, distribution or copying of the E-mail is strictly prohibited. This E-mail and any files transmitted within it have been checked for all known viruses. The recipient should still check the E-mail and any attachments for the presence of viruses. as South Wales Police accepts no liability for any damage caused by any virus transmitted by this E-mail.

South Wales Police reserves the right to monitor all E-mail activity and content.

Appendix E - Photographs used during focus groups

E(a) – Two male patrol officers

This photograph was shown with the view of obtaining views and thoughts about the police uniform, along with the gender of police officer.

E(b) – Male patrol officer during royal visit.

This photograph was chosen as it represents a positive scenario in relation to policing. The officer is wearing minimal uniform, and appears very friendly. The reaction from the waiting crowd appears to be jovial also. The researcher was interested to gauge whether this happy scene was appealing to participants.

E(c) – Two female mounted police officers

This photograph was chosen for three reasons. To obtain views with regards to the use of horses/animals, along with feelings regarding the gender of the officers and the uniform they are wearing.

E(d) – Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) engaging pensioner.

The photograph of a PCSO engaging a pensioner was shown to participants in order to gain their views and perceptions of PCSO's.

E(e) – Male police officers with police dogs.

The researcher was interested in how participants felt regarding police dogs, therefore the following photograph showing police officers in uniform, with police dogs.

E(f) – Riot police officer with police dog.

Once again, the researcher was keen to discover the views and feelings of participants of a police officer and police dog. This image shows the police officer wearing full riot gear.

E(g) – Police officers in riot gear.

A photograph showing police officers in full riot gear was shown to participants in order to gain some understanding of how they feel when they see such images.

E(h) – Police officers in riot gear and football fans.

The following photograph shows a scene involving the police in riot gear, and football fans. These are images that are readily seen on television, therefore the researcher wanted to gain some understanding about how participants perceive such images.

E(i) – Riot

A similar photograph of a riot was shown to participants to gain understanding as to how such images make them feel.

Appendix F

Topic Guide used During Stage One of the Study

1. Describe the experiences of hate crime of the adults who you support.
2. Do the adults you support have good knowledge of hate crime?
3. What are the effects of hate crime on the adults you support?
4. Are the adults you support able to report hate crime to the police?
5. What reasons do you believe would prevent an adults with learning difficulties from reporting hate crime to the police?
6. What are the experiences of adults you support who have reported hate crime to the police?
7. Describe the experiences of adults you support who have been to court.
8. What further support has been available to the adults you support once they have reported hate crime.
9. What recommendations would you make for improvements to the engagement process between the police and adults with learning difficulties?

Appendix G

Topic Guide used During Stage Two of the Study

1. Do you have any experiences of engagement with the police?
2. How do you feel about the police visiting your groups on a regular basis?
3. What do you know about hate crime?
4. Have you ever experienced hate crime?
5. How does hate crime affect you?
6. Do you have any experience of reporting hate crime to the police?
7. Do you feel abo=le to report hate crime to the police, or would you prefer to report to somebody else?
8. What recommendations do you have to improve your relationship with the police?

Appendix H.

Table showing the databases searched during the literature review.

All search terms are listed, along with the number of hits (articles) that were generated. Of these the number of articles relevant to this study is noted, some of which were previously discovered during the search.

	ASSIA (Applied Social Science Index and Abstracts)			Criminal Justice Abstracts		
Search Term	**No of hits**	**Relevant**	**Previously discovered**	**No of hits**	**Relevant**	**Previously discovered**
Hate crime AND learning disability	19	6	0	4	4	2
Disability Hate Crime	5	4	4	5	5	1
Police Engagement	31	2	0	19	0	0
Police AND learning disability	20	0	0	9	5	3
Reporting Hate Crime	3	1	1	2	1	1
Victims of Hate Crime	7	4	3	27	3	0
Victims of Disability Hate Crime	1	1	1	1	1	1
Neighbourhood Policing	27	5	0	19	6	4
Big Society AND police	85	3	1	6	3	2
Participation AND learning disability	12	1	1	7	1	0
Mild learning disability	58	3	0	5	0	0
Learning Disability AND Legislation	15	2	0	12	4	2
Barriers to engagement AND Learning Disability	1	1	0	0	0	0
Models of Disability	185	5	0	60	1	0
Learning disabilities AND Criminal Justice System	5	1	1	15	2	2
Identifying learning disabilities AND police	1	1	1	179	8	8
Victim Support AND learning disability	2	2	2	1	0	0